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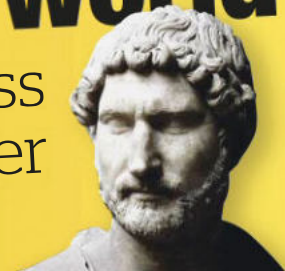
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APRIL 2016

# WELCOME

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MAGAZINE

“It was 400 years ago this month that England's best-known writer breathed his last. The **anniversary of Shakespeare's death** will see a plethora of cultural events take place across the country, accompanied by a range of exciting new programmes on BBC television and radio. But though his works have been endlessly analysed over the centuries, there is always more to discover about a man who had a huge impact on popular history as well as literature.

In this issue, historian Jerry Brotton offers a different perspective on **Shakespeare's plays**, showing how the historical events and characters about which he wrote frequently mirrored those of his own lifetime. How much, for example, did Shakespeare's *Richard II* hint at the decline of Queen Elizabeth I? Can we also see echoes of the gunpowder plot in the tale of *Macbeth*? Turn to page 40 for the beginning of our Shakespeare coverage, which also includes a panel discussion about some of the **big mysteries of the playwright's life**.

One of Shakespeare's preoccupations was, of course, **ancient Rome** and that's a topic that we're also covering in detail this month. Ahead of an upcoming BBC TV series, Mary Beard explains **how Rome was able to forge such a powerful empire** (page 32), while on page 26 Alison Cooley takes us on a **world tour with the wall-builder, Hadrian**.

If that's not enough to whet your historical appetite this month, we also have articles on **Catherine Howard** (page 22), Anglo-Saxon king **Edmund Ironside** (page 59) and the **dissolution of the monasteries** (page 80).

## Rob Attar

Editor

BSME Editor of the Year 2015, Special Interest Brand



## THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS



### Jerry Brotton

Shakespeare's relationship with his own history remains surprisingly little known. As well as examining his interest in high political history, I'm fascinated by how Shakespeare dramatised the lives of exiles, émigrés and outsiders in addition to those of royalty.

● Jerry looks at the subtexts of eight plays on page 46



### Alison Cooley

I have long been interested in the way newly discovered inscriptions can offer unexpected insights into the lives of the ancient Romans, whether recording the last known words of the emperor Hadrian or revealing the impression made on contemporary viewers by Hadrian's Wall.

● Alison discusses Hadrian's itchy feet on page 26



### Clare Jackson

Charles II was a polarising character in his own time. One of the things about charismatic individuals is their capacity to create an enviable - but also quite elusive - quality. Charles clearly divided contemporaries, and he's totally polarised his subsequent reception, too.

● Clare talks about the 'merry monarch' on page 65

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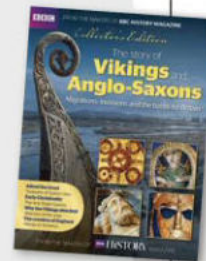
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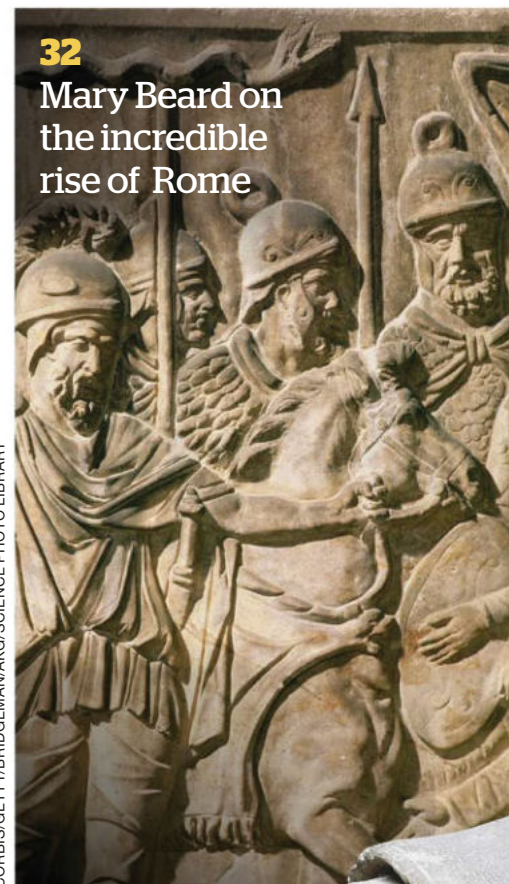


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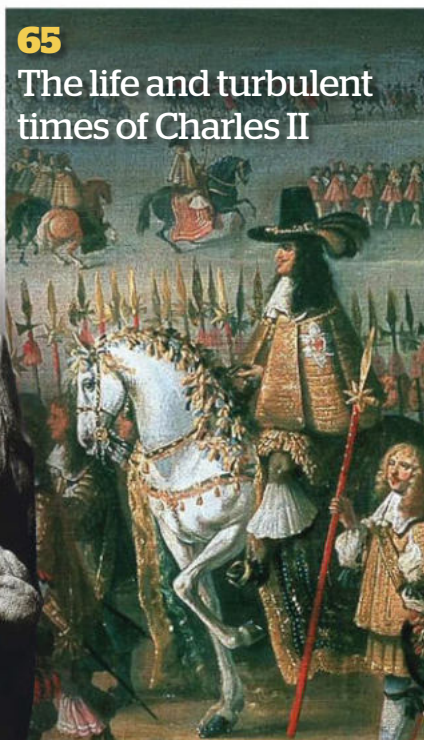


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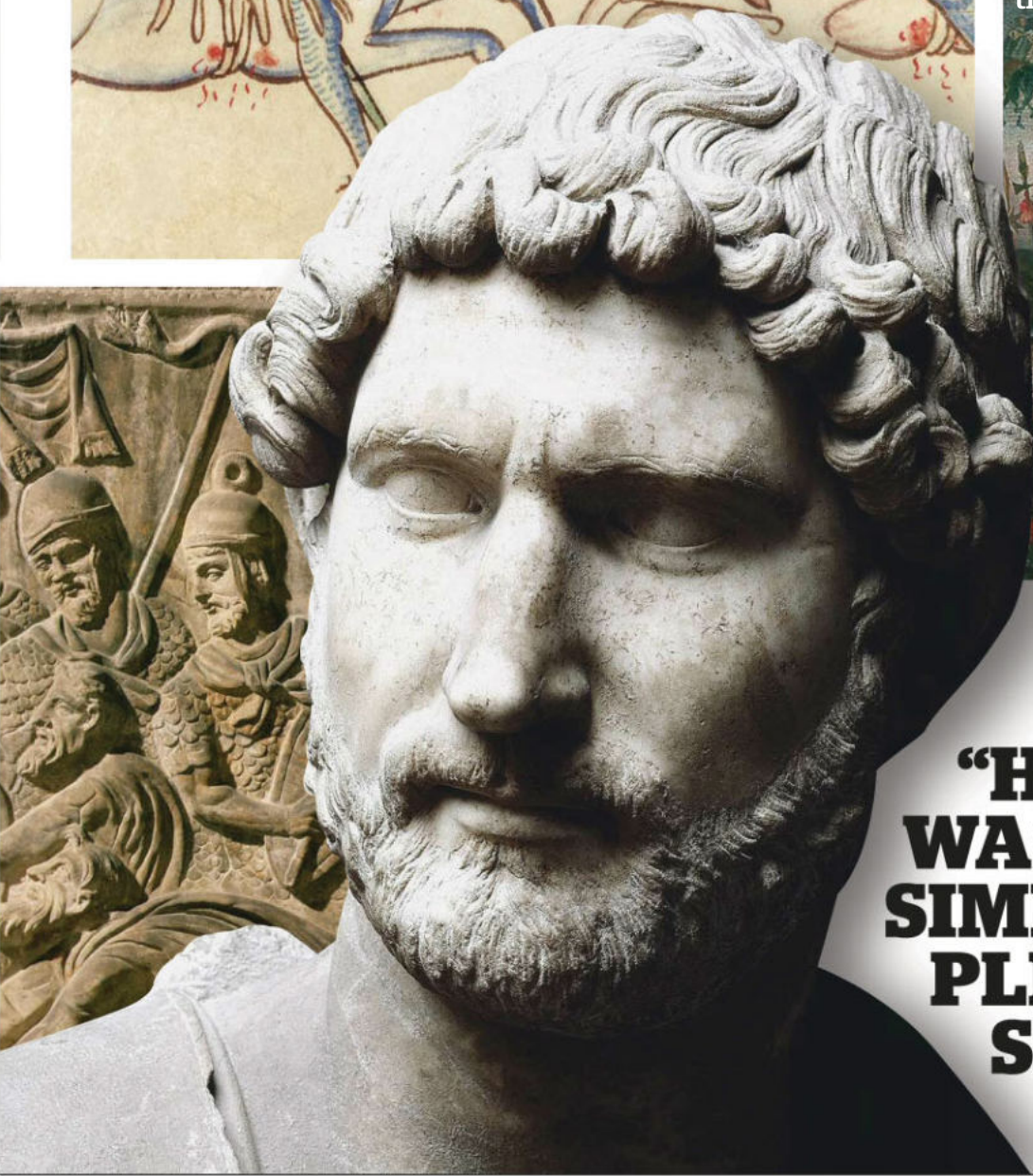
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**“HADRIAN  
WAS NOT  
SIMPLY A  
PLEASURE-  
SEEKING  
RULER”**





**Dominic Sandbrook** highlights events that took place in **April** in history

# ANNIVERSARIES

**20 April 1653**

## Cromwell forcibly dissolves the Rump Parliament

*The angry leader takes an armed force into the House of Commons and drives out all the MPs*

**O**n the morning of 20 April 1653, Oliver Cromwell took his seat, as usual, in the House of Commons. The Rump Parliament, as it was known, was supposed to have been only a caretaker legislature, paving the way for godly reform and a permanent political settlement after the execution of King Charles I. But instead of meekly complying with the New Model Army's demands, MPs showed themselves rather more interested in defending their own privileges. And by 20 April, Cromwell's patience had run out.

For a little while he listened grimly to his colleagues' speeches. But then he cracked. "You have sat too long for any good you have been doing lately," he shouted bitterly. "Depart, I say; and let us have done with you. In the name of God,

go!" At that, he went outside and returned with a troop of musketeers, whom he ordered to clear the chamber. According to one account: "He told Sir Henry Vane he was a jugler; Henry Martin and Sir Peter Wentworth, that they were whoremasters; Thomas Chaloner, he was a drunkard; and Allen the Goldsmith that he cheated the publick." Then he gestured angrily at the mace, the symbol of parliamentary power, and said dismissively: "Take away that Fool's Bauble".

When Cromwell's troops had cleared the room, the doors were shut. The Rump was dissolved. Cromwell, shortly to become lord protector, was now the undisputed master of Britain. Later, a wag posted a notice on the door: "This house is to be let; now unfurnished".



The scene in the House of Commons in 1653 after Oliver Cromwell lost his temper with MPs and forced them all to leave

**28 April 1789**

## Mutiny on the Bounty

*Disaffected crew seize control from their ship's captain*

**A**t the beginning of April 1789, HMS *Bounty* left the South Pacific island of Tahiti, carrying plants to the West Indies. The ship had been in Tahiti since the previous autumn, and the crew had amused themselves in the sunshine with the local women. But as they ploughed through the Pacific, they chafed at the restoration of discipline under the captain, William Bligh. By the night of 27 April, his old friend Fletcher Christian had decided to act.

In the early hours of the following morning, Christian and a few allies secured the upper deck and armed themselves with muskets. Some time after five o'clock, Christian led them into Bligh's cabin. By his own account, the captain "called as loudly as I could in hopes of assistance", but the mutineers managed to drag him away. By now, the *Bounty* was in chaos. On the quarterdeck, surrounded by mutineers, Bligh shouted for help, urging his shipmates to "knock Christian down". Amid the general yelling, Christian exhorted the men to back him instead; to one, he remarked: "I have been in hell for weeks past. Captain Bligh has brought this on himself."

Contrary to Christian's expectation, many of the men were determined to support the captain, not the mutineers, which suggests Bligh's reputation for harshness is ill deserved. In all, 18 men joined Bligh in the ship's launch. The carpenter's mates and armourer wanted to go too, but Christian forbade it. "Never fear, lads," Bligh said. "I'll do you justice if ever I reach England."

Bligh did reach England, months later. But the mutineers' fate was wretched. Fleeing across the Pacific, many were captured, others killed. Christian was killed on Pitcairn (where some mutineers eventually settled) in 1793.

ALAMY



**Dominic Sandbrook** is a historian and presenter. His latest series, *Let Us Entertain You*, recently aired on BBC Two



GETTY IMAGES

Captain Bligh is set adrift in an open boat with loyal crew members after the seizure of HMS *Bounty* by mutineers. Bligh's chances of survival weren't great, but he would eventually get back to England, while the mutineers didn't fare so well



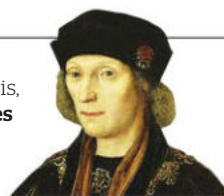


**19 April 797**

The Byzantine emperor **Constantine VI** is blinded and deposed by a coup organised by his own mother, Irene (shown on a coin with her son), who assumes power herself.

**21 April 1509**

Afflicted with tuberculosis, **Henry VII of England** dies at his new palace in Richmond, Surrey at the age of 52.



**27 April 1805**

In what is modern day Libya, **US Marines and Arab mercenaries** attack the port of **Derna**, hoping to crush the power of the Barbary corsairs.



**Richard I (left)** – shown on a set of tiles with Islamic leader **Saladin** during the Third Crusade – was suspected of being behind the death of **Conrad I of Jerusalem** in 1192

**28 April 1192**

## Members of Assassins cult kill Conrad I of Jerusalem

*In spite of his renowned vigour and intelligence, Conrad was murdered just four days after becoming king*

**C**onrad of Montferrat, who became king of Jerusalem during the Third Crusade, was widely regarded as one of the most impressive men of his generation. “Conrad was vigorous in arms, extremely clever both in natural mental ability and by learning, amiable in character and deed, endowed with all the human virtues, supreme in every council, the fair hope of his own side and a blazing lightning-bolt to the foe,”

wrote one chronicler. But by that point, Conrad was also dead.

For Conrad, the spring of 1192 was dominated by a bitter feud with Richard I of England over the throne of Jerusalem. On 24 April, secure in his fortress at Tyre, Conrad heard the news that he had been elected king. Only four days later, however, the Assassins struck.

It was lunchtime, and Conrad was returning home from the house of his

friend Philip, Bishop of Beauvais when he was accosted by two men, who plunged their daggers into his body. Death almost certainly came very swiftly. One of the murderers was killed on the spot; the other, wounded, was put to torture. It turned out that he was a member of the infamous Assassins, a Nizari Shia sect led by the ‘Old Man of the Mountain’, who supposedly encouraged them to gear themselves up for murder with copious amounts of hashish.

In reality, many of the lurid stories associated with the Assassins were probably invented. The real author of the plot to kill Conrad was almost certainly somebody much closer to home: Richard the Lionheart. Indeed, when Richard was later imprisoned by Leopold of Austria, Conrad’s murder featured heavily on the charge sheet.



26 April 1986

## Chernobyl reactor explodes

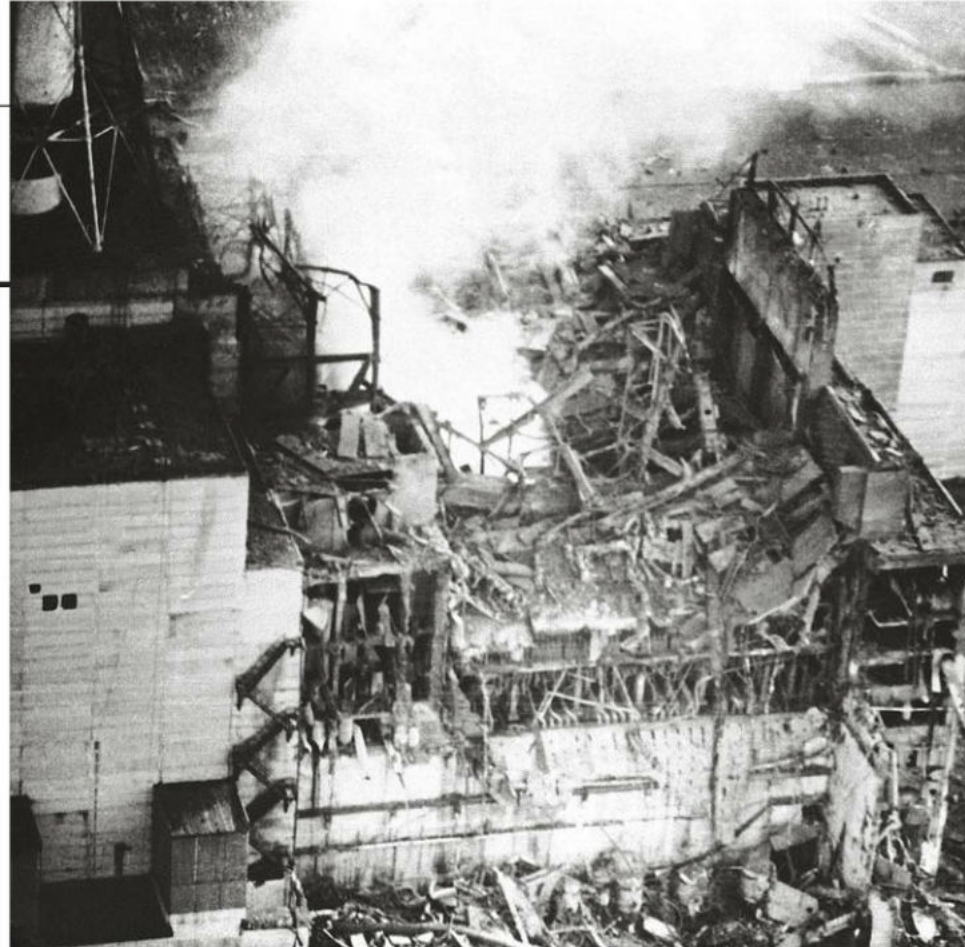
*A catastrophic nuclear accident starts in Ukraine*

**T**he Chernobyl disaster, which began on 26 April 1986, was the worst nuclear accident in history.

Even now, its legacy continues to blight Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, the countries worst affected by the fallout. And although the Soviet authorities initially tried to cover it up, the accident dealt a hammer blow to their manicured image of socialist modernity.

The accident began during a routine test at Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine, scheduled for just after one o'clock in the morning of 26 April. Only moments after the test had started, reactor four suffered a huge and unexpected power surge.

What followed was the engineers' worst nightmare: a rapid steam explosion, rupturing the fuel channels and severing the coolant lines. Seconds later, another explosion sent fragments of the nuclear core flying into the air, hurling more radioactive fallout over the surrounding area than had been released



The Chernobyl reactor after the explosion in April 1986 that spread radioactive fallout across Europe and the northern hemisphere

at Hiroshima. In less than a minute, the majority of the workers in the building had received fatal doses of radiation, though none of them knew it. Within three weeks, most of them were dead.

Local fire crews arrived only moments after the alarm sounded. One of the drivers, Grigorii Khmel, later recalled: "We arrived there at 10 or 15 minutes to two in the morning... We saw graphite scattered about. Misha asked: 'Is that graphite?' I kicked it away. But one of the

fighters on the other truck picked it up. 'It's hot,' he said."

As Khmel admitted, none of the fire crews knew anything about radiation. "Even those who worked there had no idea. There was no water left in the trucks. Misha filled a cistern and we aimed the water at the top. Then those boys who died went up to the roof – Vashchik, Kolya and others, and Volodya Pravik... They went up the ladder... and I never saw them again." ■

### COMMENT / Jonathan Hogg

#### "Chernobyl makes it harder for people to believe in a safe nuclear future"

**“**Worldwide perceptions of nuclear safety would never be the same again. A deadly radioactive cloud drifted across Europe, and many countries had to deal with contamination for decades.

Areas within 20 miles of the reactor remain deserted. The immediate impact was devastating, with rates of thyroid cancer in children increasing in heavily contaminated areas. Regarding longer term effects, many studies claim the number of people affected stretches into the thousands. Animals and plant-life were harmed, causing complications relating to the human food chain. The clean-up is

ongoing, which is extremely expensive for countries involved. A sarcophagus built around the reactor to contain contamination has failed; a new protective building should be completed in 2018.

Historically, all governments that use nuclear technology for power generation put a positive spin on it: after all, its citizens will receive cheap, clean energy. Chernobyl undermined such confident nuclear rhetoric, making it harder for people to believe in the promise of a safe nuclear future. While the events leading up to the accident can be blamed on the crumbling Soviet regime, the disaster should still

serve as a reminder of the risk, uncertainty and danger inherent in humanity's use of nuclear technology. **”**



**Jonathan Hogg** is the author of *British Nuclear Culture: Official and Unofficial Narratives in the Long 20th Century* (Bloomsbury, 2016), and senior lecturer in 20th-century history at the University of Liverpool





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# HISTORY NOW

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## **Superiority complex**

Herman Lundborg, photographed in the early 1920s. The work of the Swedish 'eugenicist' has been linked with the appropriation of the indigenous population's land



## The father of eugenics' affair with a 'racially inferior' woman

Newly discovered letters show that a leading eugenicist's ideas about racial purity didn't extend to his own private life.

**Emma Hartley** reports

**O**ne of the leading voices in eugenics actively contradicted the movement's rules in his own personal life, a new study reveals.

Herman Lundborg, born in 1868, was a Swedish eugenicist and the head of the world's first state institute dedicated to 'racial biology', which opened in the city of Uppsala in eastern Sweden in 1922. A large cache of personal letters discovered in a library in the city suggests that he had a series of sexual relationships with women

from the supposedly 'inferior races' that he studied. In particular, the letters reveal for the first time that Lundborg had a lengthy relationship with Maria Isaksson, a woman who he regarded as being of mixed Finnish and Sami, or indigenous, origin. The couple later married and had a child.

The research features in a new biography of Lundborg by award-winning writer Maja Hagerman, set to be published in Sweden this spring. It details how Lundborg and Isaksson met on a field trip, and that she





**Uniformity of thought** Nazi minister Heinrich Himmler addresses a group of female Hitler Youth in 1937. The Nazis' ideas of 'racial hygiene' were, in part, based on the work of Herman Lundborg, a key proponent of eugenics in the 1920s and 1930s

became his assistant. Her role involved helping Lundborg with his research, aimed at discovering where the population was at its most 'racially pure'.

The biography charts how, months after they met, Isaksson joined Lundborg at Uppsala, where she lived in his apartment at the institute and was paid a salary as a cleaner. When she became pregnant she was sent miles away to give birth to their child, Allan, from whom she was briefly separated. But after Lundborg retired from academia in 1935 and his first wife had died, he moved to be with Isaksson and their son, and they spent their remaining years away from the public gaze.

At the time that Lundborg's research began, many of Sweden's political parties showed at least some interest in the study of eugenics, the widely discredited theory that people can be sorted into a hierarchy of 'racial' groups. In fact, by the 1920s, sorting people into imagined racial hierarchies had become politically and academically fashionable. Lundborg's work has been linked to a

**"Eugenicists were real people, living in the real world, and it is vital to know this rather than exoticising them"**

contemporary colonial attitude towards Sweden's indigenous people, which experts suggest made it possible to appropriate their land with impunity.

Lundborg was also influential outside of Sweden. He was given an honorary doctorate by Heidelberg University in Germany in 1936 for his contribution to the 'science' of race biology, and was sympathetic to the aims of the Nazis. He made a speech at a population conference in Berlin in 1935, praising the regime for its approach and stressing his belief that Jews had no place in Europe because he considered them a 'non-European' people. Indeed, the cache of papers contains a letter from SS commander Heinrich Himmler detailing his plans for the SS to be made "racially hygienic", based in part on Lundborg's work.

His apparent hypocrisy is also interesting because of the impact he may have had on Sweden's attitude to race – with ramifications that are still being played out today.

Marius Turda, a historian at Oxford Brookes University, said: "I hope this book will be translated into English: eugenicists were real people, living in the real world with real problems. It is vital to know this rather than exoticising them."

**Käraste Herman: rasbiologen Herman Lundborgs gåta** by Maja Hagerman is published in Swedish by Nordstedts

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED THIS MONTH

### An ancient wheel is the oldest UK find of its kind

A fully intact Bronze Age wheel found at Must Farm in Cambridgeshire is the earliest and largest example yet unearthed in the UK. The 3,000-year-old wheel, which measures a metre in diameter and still features its hub, was discovered at a site at which a series of finds have been made in recent months, including beads, pots and circular wooden houses.

### Can't quit smoking? Blame the Neanderthals

Some instances of modern medical phenomena – including a tendency towards tobacco addiction – may be influenced by DNA inherited from our Neanderthal ancestors, experts suggest. The research, published in *Science*, found the associations when searching for people with the same genetic variations as the ancient species. Scientists stress, however, that there is no direct causal link to the medical conditions.

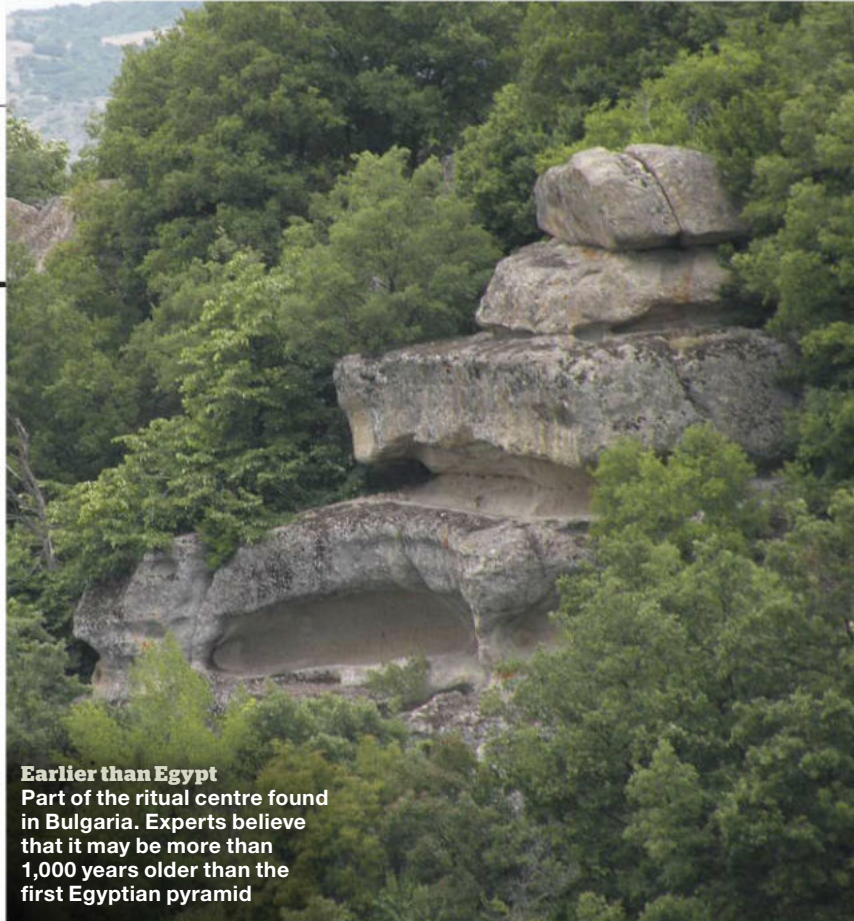
### Henry VIII may have suffered brain damage

Repeated head injuries – including those sustained in jousting – may have contributed to Henry VIII's volatile temper and poor self-control, US researchers have suggested. The study, published by Yale Memory Clinic, argues that "traumatic brain injury could have caused diffuse axonal injury [which leads the wires linking cells in the brain to become damaged] which led to a change in the psychological makeup of Henry". However, Tudor expert Tracy Borman urged caution, pointing to the pain of a leg injury as a more likely cause.



**Might Henry VIII have experienced head trauma?**





**Earlier than Egypt**  
Part of the ritual centre found in Bulgaria. Experts believe that it may be more than 1,000 years older than the first Egyptian pyramid

#### ARCHAEOLOGY

## Scientists uncover the world's oldest pyramid... in Bulgaria

**F**or millennia, the pyramids of Egypt have inspired awe among those lucky enough to witness them. But, in at least one respect, it seems that a series of massive rock steps recently discovered deep in the mountains of Bulgaria may put the pharaohs' celebrated resting places in the shade.

This natural pyramid-shaped rock formation was, experts believe, fashioned into an important ritual centre at some point between 4,500 and 4,000 BC – meaning that it was used at least 1,350 years before pyramidal structures were built in Egypt, and 1,100 before those of the Mesopotamian civilisation.

Located near the Bulgarian village of Kovil in the Rhodope mountains, the 15-metre-high edifice features five natural rock steps. On the lowest and largest of these, is a rock-cut altar that is illuminated by the sun's rays at sunrise

“Experts have found an altar that is illuminated by the sun on the vernal and autumnal equinox”

on the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. This has led archaeologists to suggest that the site functioned as a solar temple.

The upper steps of the pyramid also feature rock-cut altars, while a series of mysterious channels are carved into the rock.

It seems that the rock-cut altar was quite a late addition to the site. In fact, the team of archaeologists investigating the find – led by Bulgarian academic Vassil Markov – believe that it was made in around 2,500 BC, centuries after the area was first used as a cult centre. And, far from standing in isolation, the pyramid is part of a larger prehistoric ritual complex of up to a square mile.

This latest find follows the discovery of two smaller, pyramid-shaped rock outcrops also used for cult practices. Yet it is the sheer scale of the new discovery that makes it stand out. “I was stunned when I stood in front of it,” said Markov, head of the University Research Centre for Ancient European and Eastern Mediterranean cultures at Bulgaria's South-West University. “I am unable to offer an explanation as to why it had been missed by scientists.” *David Keys*

#### POLL

## Which historical figures are *you* talking about?

**T**his summer sees the return of our annual History Hot 100 list – and we want to know which historical figures are grabbing your attention at the moment.

Whether they are featured in a book that you are reading, portrayed in a recent television or radio drama, or are simply a character that you find particularly fascinating, we want you to tell us about them. You can choose up to three people from any historical period, as long as they died more than 30 years ago (before 1 January 1986). You will have up to 100 words to tell us the reasons behind your nominations.

We will also be disclosing the biggest winners and losers compared to last year's inaugural list, which was topped by Plantagenet king Richard III. Which historical figure has experienced a sudden surge of popularity? Who has slipped from public attention in the past 12 months? And why? We'll reveal all...

Voting opens on 24 March and closes at midnight on 18 April. We will then count the votes and publish the full Hot 100 list in an issue of *BBC History Magazine* later this year.

To take part, visit [historyextra.com/bbchistormagazine/hot100](http://historyextra.com/bbchistormagazine/hot100), where you can also read the full terms and conditions – and get voting! *Matt Elton*



**Richard III and Marie Antoinette**  
both featured in last year's top 100



## The historians' view...

# What's the story behind Labour's stance on the EU?

The referendum on the UK's membership of the EU approaches. Last month we looked at the Conservative party's views on the issue: this month we turn the spotlight on Labour. Two historians offer their personal perspectives on the party's thinking on Europe since the Second World War

Interviews by **Chris Bowlby**, a BBC journalist specialising in history

“There has always been scepticism in the Labour party about involvement in the EC/EU. But it always wanted the European grouping to succeed

**DR HELEN PARR**

**W**hen, in 1950, the French proposed a supranational European coal and steel community, Clement Attlee's Labour government did not seek to join, but then Britain's position in the world was very different – it was an imperial power and leader of the Commonwealth. Sterling was the world's second most influential currency, Britain conducted most of its trade outside Europe, and close ties with the US gave Britain a special responsibility to maintain newfound peace in Europe. French proposals seemed inimical to British constitutional traditions, and the government did not want to restrain economic sovereignty, particularly after the nationalisation of the coal and steel industries. Deputy PM Herbert Morrison famously said Britain could not participate because “the Durham miners won't wear it”.

By the late 1960s, Britain's global position had changed, and so too had the European Community (EC). In 1967, Labour PM Harold Wilson applied for membership. He had little love for “Europe”, but could see alternatives were worse. “Going it alone” was possible but undesirable. Britain would become, the cabinet thought, a “greater Sweden”.

The Labour party accepted Wilson's application without much enthusiasm. French President de Gaulle's opposition to British entry meant Wilson could not take Britain in, but his application laid the ground for Edward Heath's successful bid in 1973.

In 1975, Wilson was back in Number Ten. By this time, Labour was divided about membership. The left, encouraged by Tony Benn, came to advocate an ‘Alternative Economic Strategy’ of nationalisation and centralised state planning. Membership of the EC would undermine these proposals, and many came to see it as a Catholic, conservative and capitalist club that wore away parliamentary sovereignty and would never put the rights of workers first. The majority in the Labour party, however, were agnostic.

With the party split, 1975's referendum was a ‘life raft’ to maintain unity. Wilson suspended collective Cabinet responsibility. The majority of Britain's political centre-ground supported Britain's continued membership. Some, such as Roy Jenkins or

Politicians sing *The Red Flag* at the 1967 Labour party conference, the year PM Wilson (second from right) applied for EEC membership



Shirley Williams, advocated a more exclusively European role for Britain or saw membership of the EC as the centre of Britain's internationalism. Most simply had a realistic view of Britain's future interests.

After the 1979 election, the left gained more influence in the party, and in 1981, Jenkins, Williams, David Owen and Bill Rodgers established the Social Democratic Party (SDP). They felt British politics was becoming polarised, and sought to reclaim the middle ground. Support for EC membership was one part of that.

Labour's heavy election defeat in 1983 galvanised Neil Kinnock to push the party to accept EC membership. Margaret Thatcher advocated free markets; the European Commission proposed a Social Chapter. The EC, Kinnock argued, was the only body with sufficient influence to regulate markets and to secure employment rights for its people.

There has always been scepticism in the Labour party about British involvement in the EC/EU. But Labour always wanted the European grouping to succeed. Since 1967, Labour's appetite for power has been bound up with its acceptance that while

Labour might not love Europe, Britain has to be a member.



**Dr Helen Parr** is senior lecturer in international relations at Keele University





“The EU question has been fairly unique in British politics as it is an umbrella issue, incorporating lots of other issues

**DR VICTORIA HONEYMAN**

If there was one leader who wanted to make Labour more decisively pro-European, it was Tony Blair. He argued that previous PMs, Heath excepted, had privileged the US-UK relationship above that with Europe, and that this was unnecessary: Britain could work with both EU and US.

However, foreign policy was one area where Blair was largely inexperienced, having held no foreign affairs portfolio in opposition. The realities of government soon began to impede his scope for action, as it became clear that the EU and the US are not always in agreement on policy, leaving the UK somewhat stuck between a rock and a hard place. This meant that when a decision had to be made, Blair, like his predecessors, valued the US-UK relationship more than good relations with the EU. As early as 1998 over the situation in Kosovo, it was already

clear that while Tony Blair wanted to retain good relations with the EU and European nations, he focused his attention on the US and President Clinton.

Blair was fairly supportive of the idea of Britain joining the single currency, the euro, although that was always going to be a very difficult policy to implement, due to public disquiet on the issue. Gordon Brown as chancellor was considerably more sceptical about the chances of success of the eurozone. And even after gaining office, the Labour party was still keen to ensure that it was viewed by the public as being responsible with the economy.

Therefore Brown was able to push for the introduction of the five economic tests, five key questions that the government would need to answer before beginning the process to join the eurozone. This allowed him to win the argument, keeping Britain out of the eurozone, largely due to that public disquiet and concern from financial markets and economic experts on the realities of launching a new currency zone with such diverse economies within it.

The subsequent eurozone crisis has certainly led the Labour party to be relieved that it did not allow Britain to join the eurozone, but has not necessarily severely dented faith in the European Union. The EU and the eurozone are distinct if deeply connected organisations and supporting the EU has not necessarily



**Labour deputy PM Morrison said Britain couldn't join a European coal and steel community as Durham miners "won't wear it"**

required support of the eurozone, or of Britain's membership of it.

The EU question has been fairly unique in British politics as it is an umbrella issue, incorporating lots of other issues – economics, the environment, Trade Union regulation, parliamentary and legal sovereignty, transport policy and more. Therefore, it has been very difficult for UK political parties to maintain a unified policy towards the EU.

It can be achieved, as the Liberal Democrats have shown, but it is very challenging, especially for larger parties, where individuals may agree on some policy areas but not on others. Within the Labour party there are still some members who are more apathetic towards the EU than others.

It is likely that in the forthcoming referendum on EU membership some of the party will join the 'Out' campaign while others will join 'In', as was the case during the 1975 referendum. But the party overall has certainly become more accepting and supportive of the EC/EU since the days of Neil Kinnock's leadership. **H**



**Dr Victoria Honeyman** is a lecturer in British politics at the University of Leeds

#### DISCOVER MORE

##### BOOK

► **Britain's Policy towards the European Community 1964-7: Harold Wilson and Britain's World Role** by Helen Parr (Routledge, 2005)



**PAST NOTES**  
EASTER EGGS**OLD NEWS***A packet of vipers is sent through the post***Manchester Courier and Lancaster General Advertiser/ 1 September 1899**

**V**ictorian Britain relished its news reports, and as the literacy of the population grew, so did its desire for news. Local, national and international news – the public could not get enough.

Soon, newspapers relied not only on their own journalists but on reports from the newly set up ‘news agencies’. One popular agency was Dalziel’s, set up by Sir Davidson Dalziel Baron of Wooler in 1890. He had spent much of his early life working as a journalist in New South Wales and the United States, and on his return to England used these connections to set up his agency.

In 1899, a ‘Dalziel telegram’ was reported in newspapers across the country, carrying a tale of “dastardly attacks” on Ricciardi, the bishop of Nardò, in Italy. The bishop had previously been subjected to bomb attacks, and now, the Rome correspondent reported, his enemies had changed tack, become far more cunning. The bishop had received a packet marked “dried fruits”, but, being suspicious by nature, and cautious given the recent attacks, had sent it on to the police.

On opening it, the packet was found to contain “eight deadly vipers”, which sprang upon the waiting policemen. The reptiles “were only killed with the greatest difficulty” by the policemen.

News story sourced from *britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk* and rediscovered by

**Fern Riddell.** Fern regularly appears on BBC Radio 3’s *Free Thinking*

ILLUSTRATION BY BEN JONES



Until the days of mass production, Easter eggs were made by hand

As we get set to binge on Easter eggs, **Julian Humphrys** serves up their history in bite-sized chunks

**Why are eggs linked with Easter time?**

It’s a mixture of symbolism and practicality. Eggs had long been seen as a symbol of new life and therefore of spring and, in later times, of the resurrection of Christ. Added to this was the fact that eggs were regarded by the medieval church as meat and were therefore forbidden during Lent. But as hens continued laying during the period this meant that there would be plenty of them around by Easter.

**What were Easter eggs like in the medieval period?**

Hard boiled and decorated. Edward I of England is reported to have paid for 450 eggs to be boiled and stained for distribution to the royal household at Easter.

**When did people start eating chocolate eggs?**

The first were produced in France and Germany in the early 19th century. JS Fry of Bristol made Britain’s first chocolate egg in 1873, and Cadbury of Birmingham followed suit two years later.

These early eggs were made of dark chocolate, but in 1905 Cadbury’s launched its Dairy Milk chocolate which was an instant hit

and soon became the chocolate of choice for British Easter eggs.

**Who ate them?**

Initially just the rich. The early chocolate eggs were rather complicated to make and were seen as a luxury gift. But improved methods of production and transportation and a lowering of trade tariffs on cocoa eventually made chocolate eggs affordable to a mass market, although adults remained the target audience until the 1950s.

**What are the world’s most expensive Easter eggs?**

The jewelled eggs that were created by Peter Carl Fabergé and his company for the Russian royal family between 1885 and 1917. The 1887 egg was rediscovered in 2012 and was valued at £20m.

The intricacy of the design of these eggs is legendary. The first Fabergé egg featured an enamelled shell which opened to reveal a gold yolk which in turn opened to reveal a multicoloured gold hen containing a diamond replica of the imperial crown from which hung a ruby. Just 50 of these luxurious eggs were made – that’s a far cry from the 200 million Cadbury Creme Eggs that are sold in Britain every year. **H**



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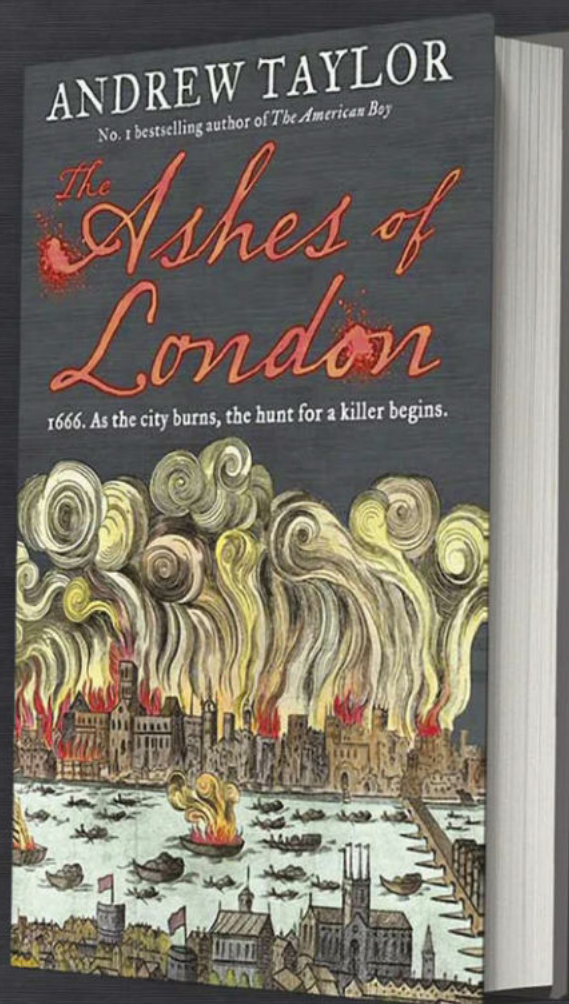
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# LETTERS

## Decimal delight

LETTER  
OF THE  
MONTH

I enjoy reading *BBC History Magazine* each month but was particularly pleased to read the article on the introduction of decimalisation in the February issue (*Anniversaries*) because, just for a change, I can say: "I was there!"

Though only a little over seven years old, I remember the weeks leading up to the big day as if it were yesterday. I still own the Britain's First Decimal Coins souvenir set in its blue plastic wallet, and the Waddingtons game *Decimal Dominoes*, with its slightly garish green-and-purple cardboard dominoes, which aimed to educate us about the new coinage and its financial equivalence to the old money.

My best memory is of the government public service adverts that, if I remember correctly, featured the upbeat ditty: "Decimal shops have decimal prices, decimal shops give decimal change," along with the rather sombre "LSD shops have



**Neil Jacobson remembers the likes of farthings and sixpences fondly**

LSD prices, LSD shops give LSD change". The clear message was that decimalisation was the fast-paced, go-ahead future, and that the old money was best retired off. I was of the generation that quickly took to the new money, but still old enough to remember fondly the florins and thrupenny bits. Happy days!

**Neil Jacobson, Harrow**

● We reward the letter of the month writer with our 'History Choice' book of the month. This issue it is *India's War* by Srinath Raghavan. Read the review on page 69



bankrupted itself fighting two world wars in less than 50 years, battling for the freedom of other nations as well as our own. Years of harsh austerity and the Cold War prevented our country feeling good about itself. However, we still managed to deliver major benefits to the world, such as the discovery of the structure of DNA and the invention of the World Wide Web, and today have much to celebrate in the arts and sport.

**Don Chester, East Yorkshire**

## Judge and be judged

Stephen Gadd more than excelled in highlighting the darker side of Henry V (*Letters*, February), albeit – as he said – writing at a safe distance of 600 years. I remember a conversation I had many years ago with the formidable provost H Wilson, PhD. I had described Edward II as a "weak king". The provost retorted: "You'd not dare say that if he were standing next to you now!"

How to judge Henry? Like all of us, he falls somewhere betwixt angel and devil. Another (and equally formidable) mentor of my earlier years was Matron Gordon, who would intervene in attempts at character assassination by saying:

*"There's so much good in the worst of us,  
And so much bad in the best of us,  
That it ill behoves any of us  
To say aught but good of the rest of us!"*

**Rev JE Moore, Glossop**

## The forgotten radical

I am ashamed to admit that, until reading your excellent article *The One-Woman Revolution* (February), I had never heard of Victoria Woodhull.

While I accept my own ignorance, it is interesting that a female of such pedigree is still hidden, even in these days of supposed equality. We have far to go before history is a truly representative entity, but at least articles such as this make a start.

**Ken Peterson, Norfolk**

**A picture of the 19th-century social campaigner Victoria Woodhull – the US's first female presidential candidate**



## Independence doh!

Chris Given-Wilson's article on Henry IV (*The Usurper King*, February) was excellent and informative, but one minor aspect has upset me no end. I have long believed that Bolingbroke landed at Ravenspur on 4 July 1399, going on to depose Richard II. Over the years this has enabled me to tease and confuse my American friends about their extravagant celebrations for 'Ravenspur Day', an event largely forgotten in England. I am now told that the landing was on 30 June, and can find nothing in my various histories that disproves this or confirms my original view; several state 'early July'. My annual joke has rather lost its edge. Can anyone help me? I feel bereft!

**Martin Sinnatt, Bordon**

## Losers or heroic risk-takers?

In February's History Essay, *Why the British Love a Plucky Loser*, Professor Stephanie Barczewski examines Britain's apparent admiration for 'heroic failures' and quotes the opinions of others expressing our "gloomy satisfaction" with national decline.

She refers to Sir John Franklin, whose North-West Passage expedition was a failure. But Franklin had previously enjoyed a successful career, fighting at Trafalgar, leading other expeditions and serving as governor of Tasmania. That is why there are statues to him. In the case of the North-West Passage expedition, the record would have looked different if he and his crew had survived, but it was the then-unknown hazard of lead poisoning from new food tins that slowly killed everyone – not incompetence.

I have a different view of 'heroic failure'. To me, Britons admire personal endeavour and courage, win or lose. And it follows that the greatest personal efforts often also involve a high risk of failure. The populist press relishes stories of defeat as much as of success, thus helping cement the perception in the public mind that we enjoy failure.

Another modern factor is that our country exhausted and





Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, pictured on skis in the Alps in 1894. The creator of Sherlock Holmes is credited with introducing skiing for sport to Switzerland



**Pests in pastry: was rat pie eaten in Paris in 1870 as a last resort?**

### Survival rat-ions

With reference to the article *What Was the Best Meal in History?* (March), may I point out that Parisian 'gastronomes' ate rats not because they were a delicacy but because France had just been ignominiously defeated in the Franco-Prussian War, and Paris was under siege. The inhabitants were reduced not only to eating rats but also to devouring every animal in the Paris zoo.

**Jenny Farmer, Bristol**

### Pioneer on the piste

Julian Humphrys' article about the popularisation of skiing in the 19th century (*Past Notes*, February) did not mention

one of the British pioneers of sport skiing: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes. He is credited with introducing skiing to the Swiss Alps when he visited Davos for his first wife's health (she would eventually die of TB). Conan Doyle was also a keen cricketer who played for the MCC, and an amateur footballer of some renown.

**Chris Hough, Pudsey**

### Correction

● In *Verdun: Hell on Earth* (February), we stated that Loos is in Belgium; it is in fact in France. Thanks to John Seriot for spotting this error. Mr Seriot also queried whether the image of a soldier on a horse on page 60 was in fact taken at Verdun. We have found no conclusive evidence either way, so if any readers can help to clarify the matter, please get in touch.

### WRITE TO US

We welcome your letters, while reserving the right to edit them. We may publish your letters on our website. Please include a daytime phone number and, if emailing, a postal address (not for publication). Letters should be no longer than 250 words.

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## SOCIAL MEDIA

What you've been saying on Twitter and Facebook



### @HistoryExtra: What are your views on the new history curriculum?

**Matthew Lewis** History teaches skills. The topic is almost irrelevant if it sparks interest and equips students to research and question

**Tom George Caddick** Yes, teaching British history in British schools is important, but teaching histories of other countries and civilisations is also what teaching history at school should be about

**Jackie Dinsdale** I don't think it is a bad thing to teach history from around the world but British history shouldn't suffer for it nor should it become a religious battle

**Lesley Sage** It's a huge mistake not to teach the history of our own country. It's PC gone mad

**Anne White** As an academic, I find this horrifying. Any culture that downplays its own historical development is a sham! World history should be taught but British history, in Britain, should be reinforced

### @HistoryExtra: Who do you think was the most important woman in history and why?

**Jayde Dixon** Elizabeth Woodville - a pivotal woman in history whose intelligence, tenacity and resilience has often been overlooked

**Paula Mumby** Rosa Parks... If it wasn't for her making a stand about sitting down where she wanted on a bus, the civil rights movement wouldn't have had a much needed kick in the pants

**Ijsalfur4940** Astrid Lindgren - She made us laugh and feel strong. She showed the world that children matter and have human rights, too

**Doreen Klose** Elizabeth I. She was a mighty monarch in a man's world

**Ceri Lowen** Jane Austen: despite the pressures on her she followed her own path and has left us with an insight into regency life of the middle classes

**Pipi Newmai** Catherine II of Russia, an enlightened despot and one of my favourite empresses

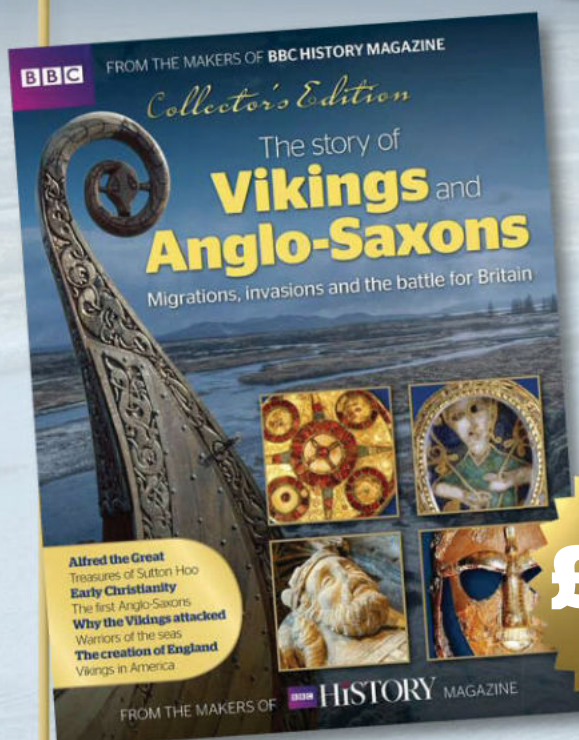
**Pauline Orr** Golda Meyer and Indira Gandhi. For paving the way for women in politics



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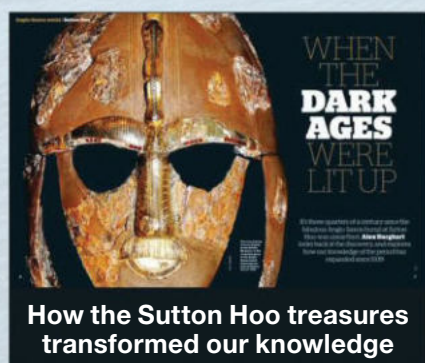
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## Michael Wood on... **why museums matter**

# “They provide a sense of identity and place in troubled times”

“Bede’s World has been saved. A few stops down the Tyne and Wear metro from Newcastle, the museum has been going since 1993, housing a Saxon village with farm animals as well as a display of the archaeological finds from the monastery founded in the last quarter of the seventh century. One of the foundational places of English, British and European history, it is a popular attraction for tourists and school visits, and was only recently the subject of a World Heritage bid. Out of the blue in February it was announced that the museum was closing for lack of funds. Then, just as we were going to press, the South Tyneside and Newcastle Groundwork charity stepped in to save the day.

But not all museums have been so lucky. In Bradford, the former National Museum of Photography (latterly the unfortunately renamed National Media Museum) is to lose one of its major assets, the Royal Photographic Society collection, which is to be moved to London. Across the UK, well over 40 museums have gone since 2010, with more facing imminent closure.

Some (including Melvyn Bragg) have seen these decisions as a kick in the teeth to the north, and to the regions in general, while millions are still ploughed into cultural projects in London and the south. As Bragg put it, museums are places where one generation learns what made us who we are – and why history matters.

And Bede’s World certainly matters. Here at Jarrow, in the seventh and eighth centuries, the former barbarians of Northumbria created a pathway for post-Roman Europe. Assimilating elements of Irish civilisation, making links with the Scots and Picts and with Europe and Rome, they helped lay the foundations of England, and of the continental renaissance under Charlemagne, which is the true beginning of modern Europe.

There were many key figures – abbesses, abbots, monks and scholars – but the greatest of them all was surely Bede (Bede). He was one of the first historians of the English and the man who in a sense defined what England would – or could – be.

A Sunderland man, Bede spent his life at Jarrow. With its sister house nearby at Monkwearmouth, Jarrow became one of the greatest centres of culture in the west, small scale but of incalculable influence. Here wealth was ploughed into art and learning by willing royal families and by an aristocracy who revelled in the links with Europe and Rome, in the beautiful productions of its scriptorium, in its architecture, sculpture and glass, and its music, painting and words. They bought into the transforming power of Christian civilisation, which in violent times enabled Germanic kingship to reinvent itself, and to remake English society in the process.

That’s why Jarrow matters so much. After so many visits over the years since I was a student, I still get a thrill alighting at the station at this former ship-building and colliery town, which is inextricably connected with great moments in our story from Bede to the Jarrow March of 1936.

The statistics tell us history is among the biggest leisure participation activities in the UK. The closures of museums over the past five years actually coincide with record numbers of visitors. Public participation has increased hugely since records began: last year 52 per cent of us visited museums, up from 42 per cent a decade ago. Public attitudes surveys show that we have great attachment to our local museums: they are places that fire the imagination, especially in the young. They also contribute to the economy. Every pound invested in culture yields two.

And there’s something else less definable. History gives value and meaning to the present, and the public opinion surveys show that museums are trusted places where we want to learn to understand our history. Museums are of and for their communities, a key educational resource providing a sense of identity and place in troubled times.

Jarrow was, and is, all this. There are few more resonant places in our story. From Bede to the tale of modern industrial Britain, the existence of Bede’s World on that windy promontory looking over Jarrow Slake gives us something more than a museum: in a community that has gone through unbelievable ups and downs, it says: “This is part of us – and we are part of it.” ■

.....  
**Michael Wood** is professor of public history, University of Manchester. His latest BBC TV series was *The Story of China*



ILLUSTRATION BY FEMKE DE JONG



# The death

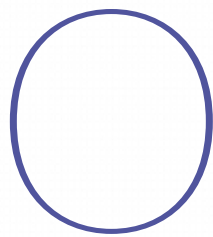


When Henry VIII's fifth wife, Catherine Howard, went to the block at a pitifully young age, she did so not because of her own crimes, argues **Josephine Wilkinson**, but the failings of older men

An 18th-century engraving of a Hans Holbein the Younger portrait thought to depict Catherine Howard. Catherine's rise from relative obscurity to queen of England was meteoric but her past would soon catch up with her



# of innocence



n the evening of Sunday 12 February 1542, Catherine Howard, queen of England, was told to prepare her soul, for she was to be put to death the following

morning. She asked for the block to be brought to her room, saying that “she wanted to know how she was to place her head on it”. Then, having “tried and placed her head on it by way of experiment”, she made her confession. There was nothing to do now except wait as the last hours of her life passed away.

It was still dark when Catherine arose the following morning. Her ladies helped her to dress in a black velvet gown, a French hood, gloves and a furred mantle – it was almost as though this were just any other day. Then the constable of the Tower came and escorted her across the short distance from the queen’s lodgings to the scaffold.

Catherine addressed the crowd who had come to watch her die. She did not protest her innocence, but accepted the verdict of the law. When her ladies had removed her mantle and hood, she knelt in the straw and placed herself on the block that was now so familiar to her. The headsman struck off her head with a

single stroke of the axe.

Catherine Howard, the fifth wife and queen of Henry VIII, was dead. She was possibly as young as 17.

Catherine was the youngest of Henry’s wives and her reign had been one of the shortest. That she had become queen at all was remarkable. The daughter of a younger brother of the 3rd Duke of Norfolk, Catherine had few prospects. The best she could hope for was a good marriage with a

minor nobleman and a life of domesticity – and she was placed into the household of her step-grandmother, Agnes, Dowager Duchess of Norfolk to be educated with this end in view.

Yet this new position was to prove a poisoned chalice, for, while living with the duchess, Catherine was sexually exploited by two men of the household. The first, Henry Mannock, was her music teacher; the second was the duchess’s gentleman usher, Francis Dereham. Both men took advantage of their position of authority in the household – and Catherine had no means of defending herself.

Redemption seemingly arrived when Catherine was selected to be a maiden of honour to Henry VIII’s new queen, Anne of Cleves. While at court she got to know a cousin, Thomas Culpeper, a gentleman of the king’s privy chamber. They quickly became firm friends, and gossip had it that they were to be married. However, Catherine was never to become Mrs Culpeper, for when King Henry’s marriage to Anne of Cleves broke down, he fell head over heels with her new maiden of honour. Within a matter of weeks – in what was a truly spectacular rise from obscurity to the seat of power – Catherine Howard had become his fifth queen.

## Extended honeymoon

Henry adored Catherine, who restored to him the youth and vitality he thought he’d lost. After an extended honeymoon they settled into married life and Catherine showed every sign of becoming a good queen. But her past was about to catch up with her.

In the summer of 1541, the court embarked upon a royal progress to the north country. While they were away a courtier, John Lascelles, took the opportunity of some free time to visit his sister Mary. She had once worked for Duchess Agnes, and Lascelles suggested she apply for a place on Catherine’s staff. Mary, however, was unenthusiastic. She remembered Catherine’s earlier sexual

**“Henry adored Catherine, who restored to him the youth and vitality he thought he’d lost. There was nothing he would not do for her”**



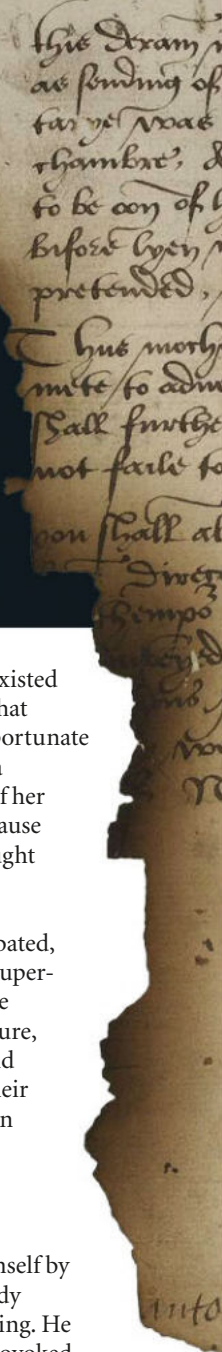


Catherine was the niece of Thomas Howard, 3rd Duke of Norfolk...



...she met Henry VIII after being appointed maiden of honour to Anne of Cleves (above)

A letter of the Lords of the Council "concerning Queen Catherine Howard's infidelities". Catherine and Culpeper never had sex but their fates were sealed by his claim that they had intended to



experiences with Henry Mannock and Francis Dereham, but blamed the young girl for what had happened. She concluded that Catherine was "light both in living and conditions". When asked to elaborate, Mary spoke of Mannock, who had boasted that he knew Catherine's "privates from all others by a privy mark", and Dereham, who was so familiar with Catherine "afore her marriage to the king that he did lie with her a hundred nights in the year in his doublet and hose abed between the sheets".

The shocked Lascelles had no choice but to reveal what he had learned – not to do so would leave him open to charges of misprision of treason, which meant imprisonment and forfeiture of his property. He told Archbishop Cranmer, who set down the facts in a letter. When the court returned from progress, Cranmer left the letter in Henry's pew for him to find.

At first Henry was incredulous, but he was obliged to investigate the claims. He ordered those involved to be interrogated – and so the whole story of Catherine's past came out.

## Their "naughty life"

Henry's grief that Catherine had not been pure when she came to him was made worse when he discovered that she might never really have been his wife. When Dereham seduced her, he asked her to call him husband, while he called her wife. Catherine agreed and, since their relationship had clearly been consummated, they were technically married according to canon law. Then it was noted that, during the progress, Dereham had asked Catherine for employment and she had given him a position in her household. His job granted him access to her chamber, and this was now made to look as though the two had contrived to continue their "former naughty life".

Details of Catherine's pre-contract with Dereham – which could have served as her defence – were suppressed. Catherine

persistently denied it had ever existed because, as she explained, "all that Dereham did unto her, was importunate [persistent] forcement, and, in a manner, violence, rather than of her free consent and will". And because she had not consented, she thought that any contract or marriage between them was invalid.

Before this point could be debated, another factor emerged which superseded everything. Under intense interrogation, and possibly torture, Dereham blurted out that he and Catherine had not continued their relationship because he had been replaced in her affections by Thomas Culpeper.

## Blind youth

Culpeper tried to exonerate himself by blaming Catherine and Jane Lady Rochford, her chief lady in waiting. He claimed Lady Rochford had "provoked him much to love the queen", adding that "she said also to him how much the queen loved him by which means he was tricked and brought into the snare which blind youth hath no grace to foresee".

Culpeper added that Catherine had given him gifts and they had met secretly at night during the progress on several occasions. Though it soon became obvious that his friendship with Catherine "had not passed beyond words", his closing remark would seal the fate of them both: "He intended and meant to do ill with the queen and that in like wise, the queen so minded to do with him." This brought them within the range of the 1534 Treason Act, under which anyone could be judged a traitor. It was immaterial whether or not Catherine and Culpeper had actually had sex because malicious intent was enough – and when it came to the safety of the king and the succession, anything could be deemed malicious.

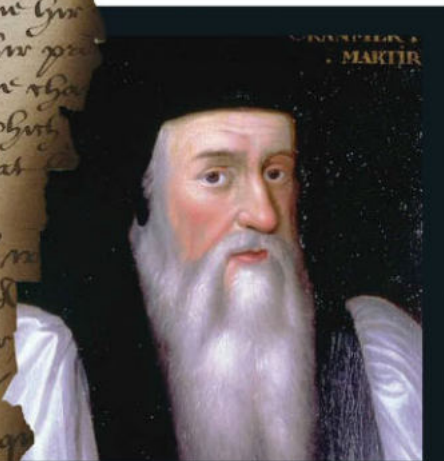
**"Henry Mannock boasted that he knew Catherine's 'privates from all others by a privy mark'"**



unto her huse, and praynd him vppon ocaſion  
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 vnto heres ſon. Thus fare ye  
 from the lmye palare at wſt  
 16th July

Yo loving frendes

W. Bolff  
 Str Winton



Thomas Cranmer apprised Henry of Catherine's "infolities"

Lady Jane and the other deponents were simply telling the interrogators what they wanted to hear. In the end, it did not matter – the queen's fate was already sealed. Catherine's household was broken up, while she was removed as queen and exiled to Syon House with only a small staff to attend her.

Shortly afterwards Culpeper and Dereham were tried and, their guilt being predicated on the presumption of Catherine's, they were condemned to death for treason. Those who had known Catherine in her youth were found guilty of misprision. Catherine would not face trial, but instead would be condemned to death by an Act of Attainder, signed by her own husband's hand.

Queen Catherine Howard went to the scaffold because it was thought she had intended to commit adultery with Francis Dereham and Thomas Culpeper. In other words, though she was innocent of any actual crime, the terms of the 1534 Treasons Act allowed Henry to condemn her for presumptive treason. While he could have annulled their marriage – on the grounds that Catherine had really been Dereham's wife – he chose not to. Instead, angry that Catherine had not been of "pure and honest condition" when he married her, and that he had been "deceived concerning her", he wanted to destroy the "jewel for womanhood", whom he had once loved so dearly. **II**

Josephine Wilkinson is an academic historian who specialises in a wide range of periods, including 16th-century England

#### DISCOVER MORE

##### BOOK

► **Catherine Howard: The Tragic Story of Henry VIII's Fifth Queen** by Josephine Wilkinson (John Murray, April 2016)

## How old was Catherine when she died?

Catherine Howard's death is made all the more tragic by the fact that she was younger than most historians have traditionally had us believe. Received opinion – inspired by the guesswork of the French ambassador Charles de Marillac – has it that she was born in 1521, and so was 21 when she went to the block. While it isn't possible to pinpoint Catherine's exact age, the wills of two of her relatives place her year of birth between 1523 and 1527, suggesting that she was significantly younger than 21. The *Spanish Chronicle* goes further, asserting that Catherine was born in 1525, which would have made her no more than 17 when she died.

A birthdate of 1525 is consistent with Catherine's career as a maiden of honour. She did not serve Anne Boleyn when Anne became queen in 1533 because she was too young. The age requirement for the position of maiden was at least 12 years but, if she was born in 1525, Catherine would only have been eight in 1533.

In 1536, Catherine received music lessons, which were intended to "polish" her in readiness to join Queen Anne's court. Sadly, by the time Catherine was old enough to serve at court, Anne was dead. Catherine was still too young to serve Jane Seymour (who became queen in 1536), and so had to wait until Anne of Cleves married Henry before she could take her place at court. The new queen's maidens were selected in late 1539, by which time – assuming the *Spanish Chronicle* was correct – Catherine was 14.



A portrait of a lady, probably Catherine Howard, in c1540, when she may have been as young as 15

Everyone who had lived at the duchess's house was interrogated about Catherine's past and their stories agreed. Lady Rochford was questioned about Catherine's relationship with Culpeper. She confirmed that they had met several times, adding that she thought "Culpeper hath known the queen carnally considering all things that this deponent hath heard and seen between them". But she also asserted that Catherine and Culpeper had "talked so secretly that she heard not their conversations" and that she was "never the privier" about what went on between them.

Catherine, too, had said that Lady Rochford "would many times, being ever by, sit somewhat far off or turn her back and she [Catherine] would say to her: 'For God's sake madam even near us.'"



COVER STORY

# EMPEROR OF THE WORLD

**HADRIAN** was not the type of emperor to lock himself away in Rome, far from his subjects, and wait for the world to come to him. He ruled over what was possibly then the largest empire in history, and he was hellbent on seeing it – hunting lions in north Africa, soaking up the culture of Athens and surveying the frigid northern outpost of Britain. But, says **Alison Cooley**, Hadrian's travels weren't simply the result of a pleasure-seeking wanderlust. Here was a man determined to remind his provinces who was in charge...





A second-century AD bust of Hadrian. The emperor was commander-in-chief of his armies; and what better way of monitoring their performance than travelling the empire to watch them train in the flesh?



**F**ortunately for historians of the Roman world, the emperor Hadrian and his courtiers could not resist the impulse to engrave their names, together with poems about their travels, upon the great monuments of

Egypt. It was, you might say, the ancient equivalent of a selfie.

As a result, we have an eyewitness account of a trip to the Colossi of Memnon that Hadrian and his wife Sabina made on 20 November AD 130. The royal couple were joined by their courtiers, including Julia Balbilla, who composed the following poem:

“By Julia Balbilla, when Hadrian Augustus heard Memnon: I had been told that Memnon the Egyptian, warmed by the ray of the sun, spoke from his Theban stone. And when he saw Hadrian, king of all, before the rays of the sun, he greeted him as best he could... Then the lord Hadrian himself also offered ample greetings to Memnon and on the monument left for posterity verses marking all that he had seen and all he had heard. And it was made clear to all that the gods loved him.”

The aim of Hadrian's visit was to marvel at one of the wonders of ancient Egypt – a colossal statue that ‘sang’ as the sun's rays struck it each morning. The statue actually depicted Pharaoh Amenhotep III, outside his temple near Luxor, but the Romans believed it was the mythical hero Memnon, son of Dawn, greeting his divine mother. Just as visitors now flock to the Great Pyramids at Giza, so Roman tourists 2,000 years ago were eager to hear this amazing phenomenon.

It was a mark of Hadrian's favour from the gods that he heard the statue sing not once, but three times. Others were not so lucky. And if you now fancy following in Hadrian's footsteps to hear the statue sing, be warned: following repairs some years after Hadrian's visit, the statue fell silent forever.

While in north Africa, Hadrian made an excursion into the desert along with his lover, Antinous, in order to participate in that most kingly pursuit, lion-hunting. The dramatic moment when a lion charged at the two of them was immortalised by Pancrates, a poet from Alexandria, whose epic-style verses happen to have been preserved on a papyrus found at Oxyrhynchus: “Straight he rushed upon them both, scourging with his tail, his haunches and sides while his eyes, beneath his brows, flashed dreadful fire; and from his ravaging jaws the foam showered to the earth as his teeth gnashed within.” Between the two

of them, though, Hadrian and Antinous together dispatched the beast, and their valiant deed lived on in verse.

From these two small scraps of evidence – an inscription carved upon an ancient statue and a fragment of papyrus – we gain a vivid impression of an emperor at leisure, taking advantage of a visit of several months to Egypt in order to see the sights.

There's little doubt that Hadrian, who reigned from AD 117 to 138, travelled around his empire to a much greater degree than most other emperors. According to an avid biographer, he may even have evoked some of the landscapes he saw on his travels in designing his villa at Tivoli (‘Villa Adriana’): “His villa at Tibur was marvellously constructed, and he actually gave to parts of it the names of provinces and places of the greatest renown, calling them, for instance, Lyceum, Academia, Prytaneum, Canopus, Poecile and Tempe.”

Whether or not actually true, this reflects a perception that Hadrian was unusually influenced by the provinces, and the idea that he deliberately evoked their landscapes within his villa still lives on in the way in which the villa is presented to tourists today.

### Commander-in-chief

But Hadrian was not simply a pleasure-seeking emperor. His travels also allowed him to make contact with his troops on deployment in the provinces, and, as commander-in-chief of the Roman army, he took an active interest in inspecting his soldiers and encouraging them to maintain their training to the highest standards.

During a visit to the headquarters of the III Augustan Legion at Lambaesis in north Africa, Hadrian carefully monitored their training exercises and then proceeded to deliver a speech, in which he addressed all the different units in turn with observations about the qualities and shortcomings which

“Hadrian's travels allowed him to **make contact with his soldiers in the provinces** and inspect their training”



### 1 Athens, Roman province of Achaea (Greece)

Hadrian transformed the physical fabric of Athens, as well as its economic and cultural environment, funding grandiose monuments and setting up a league of cities known as the Panhellenion. He spent many months there on several occasions, and reinstated Athens as cultural and intellectual capital of the Greek world. Little wonder that he was reputedly nicknamed *Graeculus* (‘Greekling’).

### 4 Lambaesis, Roman province of Africa Nova (Algeria)

In AD 128, Hadrian inspected the troops of the III Augustan Legion at their military headquarters at Lambaesis. His speech exhorting them to continue training hard, and his praise for the exercises he had reviewed, is preserved as an inscription on a monumental column set up in their parade ground.

### Memorials at the ruins of the barracks of the III Augustan Legion in Algeria



CORBIS/ALAMY/GETTY/ART ARCHIVE/MAP ILLUSTRATION: MARTIN SANDERS-MAPART.CO.UK

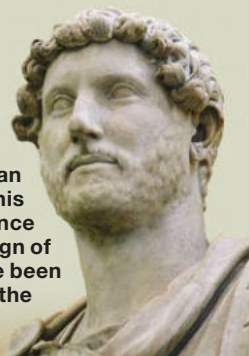


# Hadrian's travels

Six of the locations that the globe-trotting emperor visited – for duty and pleasure – during his 21-year reign

MAP ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARTIN SANDERS

A bust of Hadrian (right), found near his country residence (below), the design of which may have been influenced by the places he visited



## 2 Antioch on the Orontes, Roman province of Syria (Turkey)

At the time he became emperor in AD 117, Hadrian was governor of Syria, based at Antioch. Hadrian abandoned Emperor Trajan's conquests along the Euphrates and Tigris rivers – even though it's rumoured that Trajan's wife, Plotina (pictured), engineered his succession.



## 3 Tibur, modern Tivoli (Italy)

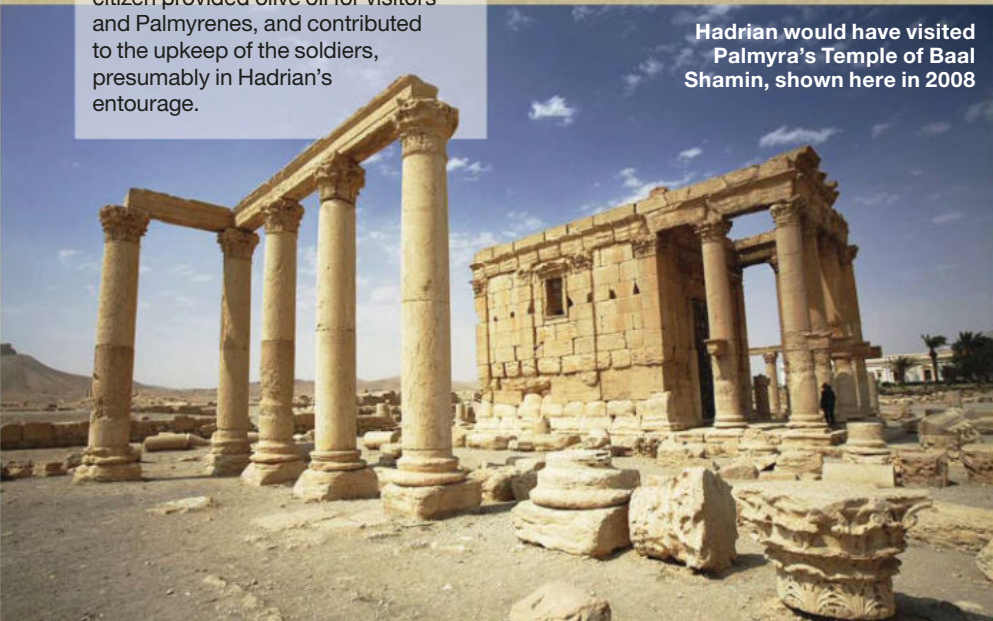
Hadrian built himself a magnificent country residence at Tibur, roughly 20 miles to the east of Rome. The architecture of Hadrian's Villa is striking both for its innovative designs and luxurious multi-coloured marbles. It was a place where Hadrian could retire for privacy, but also where he could entertain guests on a lavish scale or transact official business.



## 5 Palmyra, modern Syria

Hadrian visited in AD 129, in celebration of which the Palmyrenes adopted the name *Hadrianoi*. This would have taken the emperor into a distinctive cultural environment, where Aramaic was the local language and where distinctly non-Roman deities, such as Baal Shamin, were worshipped. During his visit, a prominent local citizen provided olive oil for visitors and Palmyrenes, and contributed to the upkeep of the soldiers, presumably in Hadrian's entourage.

Hadrian would have visited Palmyra's Temple of Baal Shamin, shown here in 2008



6



Hadrian travelled to the Colossi of Memnon in AD 130, hoping, we're told, to see one of the statues sing when the sun struck it



they had displayed to him. To one group of men, he offered encouraging words of praise: “You have built a lengthy wall, made as if for permanent winter-quarters, in nearly as short a time as if it were built from turf which is cut in even pieces, easily carried and handled, and laid without difficulty, being naturally smooth and flat. You built with big, heavy, uneven stones that no one can carry, lift or lay without their unevenness becoming evident.”

The troops clearly appreciated the emperor’s words, since the speech itself was inscribed upon a monumental column set up in their parade ground. This reminds us that the Roman army’s power lay not just in its fighting ability, but also in its engineering achievements, one of which – Hadrian’s Wall in northern England – is still so visible today.

### Athens reborn

From AD 124–32, Hadrian spent much of his time in Athens, staying there for longer than any other city apart from Rome. At this time, Athens had long lost the dominance that it had won in the days of Pericles. Where once it had been leader of a league of Greek cities, it was now merely one of many cities in the province of Achaea, utterly dependent upon Rome. Nor was it even the capital of that province: that position was now held by Corinth, which had been destroyed by the Romans in 146 BC but refounded as a Roman colony 100 years later.

Despite this, a residual sense remained of Athens’ former importance. Young Romans like Cicero’s son or the poet Horace might still be sent there to enhance their education, and some Romans remained conscious of a cultural debt to Athens. Pliny the Younger admonished a friend about to take up a post in the Greek city:

“Remember that you have been sent to the province of Achaea, to the pure and genuine Greece, where civilisation and literature, and agriculture, too, are believed to have originated... Pay regard to their antiquity, their heroic deeds, and the legends of their past... always bear in mind that this is the land

“Hadrian intervened in Athens’ politics, culture and economy to re-establish it as the **centre of the Greek world**”

which provided us with justice and gave us laws, not after conquering us but at our request; that it is Athens you go to and Sparta you rule.”

Hadrian’s extended visits to Athens were different in character from his Egyptian expedition. He intervened in the politics, culture, religious life, and economy of the city in order to re-establish Athens as the prestigious centre of the Greek world. He issued a decree taking personal responsibility for increasing revenues for the city from the production of olive oil in the surrounding territory of Attica. He intervened in a dispute about leadership succession within the philosophical school of Epicurus. He built several brand new magnificent structures, including a library, pantheon, gymnasium, and aqueduct. He completed and dedicated the Temple of Olympian Zeus, which had been started some six centuries earlier, but had remained uncompleted despite sporadic interventions by Hellenistic and Roman client kings.

With some justification, then, Hadrian was represented as a new founder for the city, supplanting its mythological hero, Theseus. His achievement was proclaimed on an arch built near the Temple of Olympian Zeus. On one side of the arch, an inscription recorded: “This is Athens, the former city of Theseus,” to which an inscription on the other side replied: “This is the city of Hadrian, not of Theseus.”

Hadrian set up a new league of cities, the Panhellenion, and established Athens as its headquarters. This league included cities from at least five different Roman provinces, and created a sense of shared kinship among them. Its members included cities on mainland Greece that are well known to us for their prominence in the classical period – Athens, Sparta, Argos, and Corinth – but also included remote cities such as Phrygian Synnada in central Anatolia (modern Sühut, in Turkey) and Libyan Cyrene.

The figure of Hadrian himself was central to the Panhellenion: not only did it establish a new cult of Hadrian Panhellenios, but the member cities could now club together in order to send embassies to the emperor with various requests and be guaranteed a favourable reception.

In addition, three new festivals were set up – the Panhellenia, the Hadrianeia, and the Olympieia – alongside the long-established festival at Athens, the Panathenaia. As a result, Athens was now the only Greek city to have an important festival every single year, attracting the best athletes, poets and orators to compete for prizes. This must have completed the transformation of Athens from small provincial city into cosmopolitan

## How Hadrian’s Wall made waves across the empire

### Did Hadrian ever see his wall?

He was one of the most widely travelled of all Roman emperors, but there’s every chance that Hadrian didn’t set eyes on the landmark with which his name will forever be associated. We know that the emperor visited Britain in AD 122 – coins issued in Rome some years later tell us so – but, as he left for Gaul the same year, he may not have found time to travel north and view the construction project.

### How impressive a piece of engineering was the wall?

Very. It consisted not only of a stone wall, but of a defensive ditch, fortlets at every mile, and two turrets between each milecastle. Its purpose – despite the assertion by Hadrian’s biographer that he “was the first to build a wall over a distance of some 80 miles, in order to separate barbarians and Romans” – was not simply to act as a defensive barrier to stop the northern barbarians from over-running the area conquered by the Romans. The presence of numerous gates suggests that it was just as important a means of controlling mobility, enabling the authorities to supervise the passage of people and goods from north to south, and collect taxes due.

### Did it impress the wider Roman world?

If the works of art celebrating the wall are anything to go by, yes. Three beautiful copper-alloy pans, with multi-coloured enamelled inlay, have been found in scattered geographical locations. One was discovered in the well of a Roman villa at Rudge in Wiltshire, while another was unearthed even further afield, in a Roman house at Amiens in northern France. The third, the Ilam Pan or Staffordshire Moors Pan, was discovered only in 2003, and is on display in the British Museum.

All three vessels bear images of the forts along Hadrian’s Wall, all labelled with their name, in geographical order, starting from the west: Bowness-on-Solway (*Mais*), Burgh-by-Sands (*Aballava*), Stanwix (*Uxelodunum*), Castelsteads (*Camboglanna*), and Birdoswald (*Banna*). Perhaps the soldiers who served on the wall took home with them a keepsake of their experience. Or maybe the wall itself – like the Colossi of Memnon – became an ancient tourist attraction, and individuals bought these artefacts as souvenirs of their visit to the northern outpost of the empire.



**“Roman tourists may have bought souvenirs of their visit to the northern outpost of the empire”**



A milecastle on Hadrian's Wall. Though it was bristling with fortlets, the wall enabled the Romans to supervise the passage of travellers, as well as keep 'barbarians' out

The second-century AD Staffordshire Moorlands Pan bears the names of forts along Hadrian's Wall. Was it made for a soldier who served there?



metropolis, as competitors and audiences descended upon the city from all corners of the Roman world. (Imagine the London 2012 Olympics being an annual event!)

### Famous last words

Hadrian's interest in the intellectual life of classical Greece extended well beyond Athens itself. As ruler of the Roman world, he was the ultimate arbiter in settling local disputes, and cities constantly sent him petitions requesting his help. Recently published are the last words known to have been issued by Hadrian, probably in early AD 138, shortly before he died, in a letter to the small town of Naryka in Locris (Greece), as inscribed upon a bronze plaque. In this letter, Hadrian responded to a dispute over whether or not Naryka could regard itself as a city. In justifying Naryka's city status, Hadrian alluded to its role within the Panhellenion he had established.

The fact that Naryka was represented not only within other local leagues but also within the supra-regional Panhellenion was one clear reason to confirm its status. Hadrian also cited as evidence in favour of city-status the political structures in place there – its council, magistrates, priests and tribes. Most striking, however, is Hadrian's assertion that “You have also been mentioned by certain of the most celebrated poets, both Roman and Greek, as ‘Narykians’, and they also name certain of the heroes as having started from your polis.” This reflects how the mythical past of classical Greece had reverberated through the centuries to become important in the eyes of the ruler of the world.

Travelling around the empire was not a necessity for a Roman emperor; if his subjects wanted help, it was up to them to set off to seek an audience with him. Hadrian, though, has been dubbed “the restless emperor”. This highlights the fact that he seems to have had an unusually proactive attitude – visiting many parts of the empire to settle disputes, review his troops and act as benefactor towards many provincial cities. Who can blame him if, in the course of his travels, he took some time out to see the sights? **II**


Professor Alison Cooley is a classicist based at the University of Warwick. Her books include *Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Routledge, 2013)

### DISCOVER MORE

#### BOOK

► **Hadrian: The Restless Emperor** by Anthony Birley (Routledge, 2000)

#### LISTEN AGAIN

► Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss Hadrian's Wall on **In Our Time**  [bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01kkr42](http://bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01kkr42)



# WHY ROME **RULED** THE **WORLD**

How did an insignificant little settlement by the river Tiber grow into a mighty empire encompassing the Mediterranean

world and much of western Europe? **Mary Beard** reveals the secret that lay behind the Roman empire's extraordinary expansion



Accompanies the forthcoming BBC Two series  
*Mary Beard's Ultimate Rome: Empire Without Limit*



A second-century AD relief shows defeated enemies of the Roman empire submitting to its soldiers – but in time these men might well have had the chance of becoming citizens themselves









**T**he Roman empire at its height, in the second century AD, stretched from the Sahara to Scotland, from Syria to Spain, and was home to well over 50 million inhabitants.

We might now deplore it: think of the brutal suppression of rebels such as Boudica, the garrisons of occupation in the provinces, or the central imposition of taxes right across the western world. Or we might admire its achievements, from the roads and super-highways that still underlie the transport networks of Europe to the single currency or even the little luxuries of life (such as baths and plumbing) that Rome offered to some lucky residents even as far away as Britain. But, whether we deplore or admire (and for most of us it's a mixture of the two), we have to ask how on earth an ordinary little town in central Italy actually acquired all that territory.

How did an undistinguished, mosquito-ridden, settlement by the Tiber climb to the top? Starting out back in the eighth century BC, and playing second or third string to much richer and more successful neighbours north and south, what gave it within just a few centuries control over the whole Italian peninsula, and soon over all of the Mediterranean world? It was something no other state has ever managed, before or since.

Thanks in part to Edward Gibbon's great book, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, we are used to debating why the empire collapsed (Barbarian invasions? Lead in the water pipes? Inflation? Immorality and decadence?). Just as important, and just as puzzling, is why it rose in the first place.

### More than military glory

Some of the favourite explanations just won't do. For a start, the Romans were not more militaristic than anyone else in the Mediterranean world. To be sure, they put enormous store by military glory. There was no more spectacular ceremony in Rome, at any period in its history, than the triumphal procession, celebrated after all the greatest Roman victories (or bloodiest massacres, depending on your point of view), putting on display, to the cheers and jeers of the Roman crowds, the loot that had been captured and the enemy prisoners taken.

And the earliest examples of Roman boasts to survive, preserved on the first tombstones and sarcophagi of Roman grandees, point to military prowess ("he captured Taurasia, Cisauna and Samnium, he subdued the whole of Lucania and he took hostages", one epitaph of the early third century BC runs). But in this

respect they were no different from any of their neighbours, who were just as committed to warfare as any Romans.

The image we have inherited – partly from the comic strips of *Astérix* – of a load of thuggish Roman squaddies ploughing into Gaul, where the plucky local inhabitants were busy at their harmless crafts, defended by no more than a magic potion, is quite wrong. In fact one traveller to Gaul in the early first century BC was shocked to discover so many severed enemy heads pinned up outside those pretty little Gallic huts (not something you saw further south – though, he conceded, you did get used to it after a while).

And equally wrong is the idea that the Romans gained control of the Greek world in the third and second centuries BC simply by riding roughshod over a load of philosophers barely capable of putting up a fight. The Greeks who fell victim to the Roman swords were the tough descendants of Alexander the Great, not a bunch of effete intellectuals.

The question is not why the Romans *kept going to war*. Warfare was endemic in the ancient Mediterranean, peace only rarely broke out, and the Romans were no better or worse than any others. The question is why the Romans *kept on winning*.

Part of the answer to that might possibly lie in some small element of superior determination in the Roman psyche. But there is no sign that the early Romans had any concerted plan to gain an empire, still less that some cabal of ambitious Roman generals sat down over a map in (say) the fourth century BC, as Roman



A triumphant Roman emperor is shown trampling his enemies in a fourth-century AD cameo

“Equally wrong is the idea the Romans gained control of the Greek world... by **riding roughshod over a load of philosophers** barely capable of putting up a fight”





expansion was beginning to get seriously under way, plotting a world takeover. For a start they didn't have maps, which made the formulation of any grand territorial plan almost impossible. Even Caesar's conquest of Gaul seems to have been based on word of mouth not on geographic planning.

An equally small part of the answer might lie in superior military tactics or hardware. The Roman army did have some unusually nasty weapons at their disposal. In a few battle sites in Gaul, for example, the simple Roman equivalent of modern land-mines have been discovered: small hooked iron barbs laid just under the ground surface intended to lodge themselves irremovably and excruciatingly painfully in the soles of the enemy feet. But, by and large, despite many modern myths about Roman military genius, battle tactics in the ancient world were fairly rudimentary on all sides, and superior weaponry was not usually the deciding factor.

What counted most in securing victory was manpower, simply the number of boots you could put on the ground. And that is precisely where the Romans soon found their advantage, by a simple mechanism that was unique in the ancient world: extending its citizenship to outsiders, including those it had defeated and, in the process, massively increasing its fighting force. The secret of Rome's success was something invisible to the eye, and much more sophisticated than hooked barbs; it was a radically new definition of what "being a citizen" meant, with all the rights and obligations that entailed.

At first sight what the Romans did differently may not seem a huge innovation. The standard pattern of warfare in Rome's early days (let's say from the eighth century BC to the fifth, before it had moved very far beyond its own hinterland) was brutal but straightforward. Rome, like its neighbours, would generally have been 'at war' in most summers.

'War' is perhaps a rather grand term for it. In practice, the sorties would have been not much more than glorified cattle raids between small towns or even villages. If the raiders won, they would have returned home with a good handful of the enemy's cows and some compensation in the form of bullion (before the age of minted coinage), no doubt leaving a trail of laddish destruction in their wake. It would be a matter of "see you again next year", when maybe the tables would be turned.

### Rules of engagement

The Romans did not change those basic rules of engagement, but they did change their outcome. Instead of just carrying their spoils back home, they gradually came to make permanent links with those they trounced: turning the defeated into Roman citizens, or forming some similar permanent alliance with them.

Why they did this is a mystery, and it may always have been an unplanned, lucky improvisation, rather than a considered strategy. But it had revolutionary consequences. For a start Rome broke the link that applied in most ancient societies between



Trajan was the first Roman emperor to hail from Spain – a clear indication of the openness of the Roman political establishment. Even the emperor might come from elsewhere

"What counted most in securing victory was manpower, simply **the number of boots you could put on the ground**"

Roman citizens: the empire expanded by absorbing the peoples it defeated, giving rights and obligations to former outsiders





citizenship and birth. The ancient democratic Athenians, for example, had rigorously restricted full Athenian citizenship to those born of two citizen parents. The Romans were emphatically saying that citizenship did not depend solely on where, or to whom, you were born. It was even possible to be a citizen of two places at once: both one's home town and Rome (the Norman Tebbit 'cricket test', as many of us remember from the 1990s, would have asked which team these people would support in a sporting fixture. But the Romans seem to have taken the possibility of dual loyalty on board without as much problem as we've had).

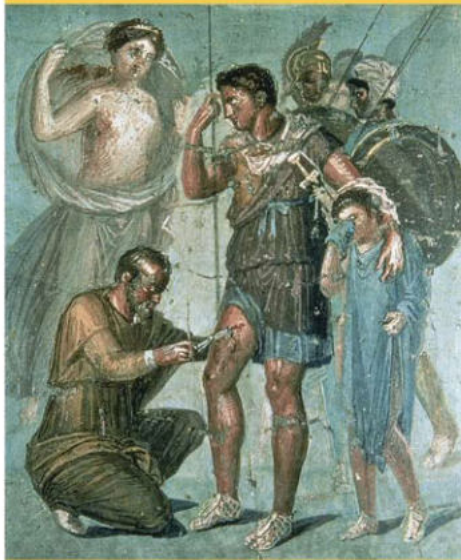
## Multiculturalism

In the long term, this set the foundations for the extraordinary multiculturalism of the Roman political hierarchy. It is thanks to these principles laid down early in Roman history that, centuries later, we find on the imperial throne Roman citizens from Spain (including the emperors Trajan and Hadrian) and Africa (Septimius Severus). But back in the early days, those same principles gave the Romans a massive advantage in their battles with their neighbours, and then with enemies further afield – for some obvious reasons.

Citizenship carried privileges, from the right to the protection of Roman law to the right to vote (though how many people from communities miles away would have made the trek to exercise those rights, we can only guess). It also carried obligations, the main one being for the men to serve in Rome's armies. To put that another way, the more Rome incorporated those they had defeated, rather than leaving them alone to fight another day, the more troops the Romans had to call on.

It was a brilliant mechanism (even if an inadvertent one) for converting one-time enemies into Roman soldiers with a stake in Roman victory – everyone had a share in the rich spoils that came with winning. And it underpinned more Roman victories that in turn produced more Roman soldiers, and more victories, and so on. By the mid-second century BC, according to one canny Greek observer, through this nexus of connections Rome could draw on more than 700,000 troops – more than any western power had been able to do before. When, soon after, Rome's great enemy, Hannibal from Carthage, knocked out legion after Roman legion, there were always more where they had come from.

Those numbers were the secret of Rome's success. It would be naive to imagine that no Romans were greedy for the wealth that came from conquest, or that none were relishing the chance of political dominance overseas. And later Romans, looking back, could claim that the Roman empire had been ordained by



A first-century BC Pompeian fresco shows the Trojan war hero Aeneas being tended for his wounds



The story goes that Romulus – shown with his twin, Remus, suckling a wolf in a mosaic of the city's foundation myth – encouraged outsiders to settle in Rome

“Romulus declared his new town a place of asylum... announcing that criminals, foreigners, runaways and ex-slaves were all welcome”

the gods; Virgil, the great poet of the first century BC, imagined Jupiter, the king of the gods, prophesying that the Romans would have “an empire without limit”. But the root cause of expansion from the fifth century BC onward was the manpower that repeatedly gave it victory, thanks to the unprecedented extension of Roman citizenship.

The Romans themselves realised how important this was, and they underlined that in the stories they told about their own origins. The Athenians, like the citizens of many Greek states, claimed that their original population had miraculously sprung from the very soil of Athens: the land and the people were integrally bound together. The Roman myths were very different, and insisted that the Romans were always in a sense foreigners to their own land.

One Roman story, made famous by Virgil in his *Aeneid*, told how the Roman race had been established in Italy by a war refugee: Aeneas, in flight from his distant hometown of Troy, after its destruction by the Greeks in the mythical Trojan War. Another focussed on the dilemmas of Romulus who, the story went, had founded the city of Rome on its permanent site on the hills by the Tiber. Romulus realised he had only a handful of citizens, so declared his new town a place of asylum, announcing that criminals, foreigners, runaways and ex-slaves were all welcome. The idea was simple: Rome was built, and thrived, on its incorporation of new citizens.

Indeed it was, and it did. And, in a way, that remains a challenge to our own times. As we see an increasing desire to enforce modern boundaries, we might do well to remember that the biggest empire in the west was proudly built on the idea that it was originally an empire of asylum seekers. I am not suggesting there is a direct lesson; the Romans rarely offer us direct lessons. But it does show us, as we look to close down our own borders, or turn a blind eye to the beaches of modern Greece or camps at Calais, that there is another way of looking at this, and other aspirations to celebrate. The origins of the Roman empire might, indirectly, still have something to teach. ■

Mary Beard is professor of classics at the University of Cambridge

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► **SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome** by Mary Beard (Profile, 2015)

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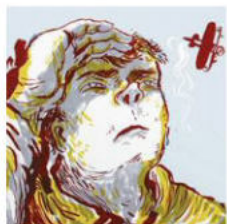


## OUR FIRST WORLD WAR

# Death from above

In part 23 of his personal testimony series, **Peter Hart** takes us to April 1916, when Zeppelins gave the people of London an unwelcome introduction to the horrors of war. Peter will be tracing the experiences of 20 people who lived through the First World War – via interviews, letters and diary entries – as its centenary progresses

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES ALBON



### James McCudden

Born in 1895, James joined the Royal Flying Corps as an air mechanic in 1913. By December 1915, he had become a regular observer/gunner for several pilots with 3 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps.

**Flight Sergeant James McCudden had been sent back to England where he began his much-anticipated training as a pilot. He progressed well and was soon allowed to embark on his first solo flight, in a Maurice Farman Longhorn, on 16 April.**

“I got off the ground safely, but I do not remember quite what happened while I was in the air. I only have a vague recollection that I sat quite still, flying automatically until I landed. During this first solo I got up to 300 feet, and then came down all the way to the ground with the engine on. When about 10 feet off the ground, I switched off and made

quite a good ‘tail-up’ landing at fully 70mph.

My instructor was quite pleased, so it must have been all right. I had seen so many accidents through want of speed that I determined that I would not stall on my first solo. Oh! That feeling when one has done one’s first solo. One imagines oneself so frightfully important.

**That same day McCudden qualified for his Royal Aero Club Certificate by flying solo while carrying out four figure of eight turns, followed by a controlled glide from 1,200 feet to land within 40 yards of a specific point. He still had much to learn – but at last he was a pilot.**

**“Oh! That feeling when one has done one’s first solo flight. One imagines oneself so frightfully important”**



### Gabrielle ‘Bobby’ West

Gabrielle ‘Bobby’ West was born in 1890, the daughter of a vicar. As a member of the Red Cross, she had helped in accommodating Belgian refugees and also cooked and cleaned at the Standish hospital.

**Bobby West was working as the night canteen manager-ess at the Woolwich Arsenal. Most nights were busy, but on Saturday 1 April she had a real shock courtesy of a German Zeppelin raid. Prewar books like the HG Wells classic *The War in the Air*, published in 1908, had painted a terrible picture of the slaughter that might ensue from such an attack.**

“A frightful thrill – have been through an air raid! I must give you a full and

solemn account of the whole performance. Just as the last boy was served, out went the lights. As soon as the lights go out each foreman is supposed to lock the door of his shop. This is a necessary precaution because one could not have hundreds of panicky men and women charging about in the dark in the open. However, we were not locked in, though we had a watchman standing at one door and the foreman at the other, which opens into the bandolier shop.



An illustration shows a Zeppelin airship caught in searchlights during a bombing raid over England in 1916



Some of the girls in the shops near started to squeal and then began to sing, but the boys were absolutely quiet. There wasn't a sound except the policemen whistling to each other and the foreman and watchman calling: "Are you there, Tom?" "Yes George!" Then all of a sudden the guns began. They don't make a great noise only a sharp, short bang almost like revolver shot. I made tracks for the door in hope of seeing.

The 'Zep' was just about three miles up like a small sausage in the sky. The minute it came into sight three searchlights were playing on it and the guns opened fire. It was hit three times. Each time it lurched and then gave a bound. Then it rose higher still in the air, turned round and did an ignominious bolt. The whole performance was over in five minutes.

As the Zep retreated it began dropping bombs. These landed partly in the river, one or two in north Woolwich where they destroyed two or three houses and killed several people, and the rest in open ground where no damage was done.

Obviously the Zep was badly hit as she came down very low and seemed lopsided as she disappeared and made an effort to get home but failed, for in the morning there was great rejoicing at the news that she had come down in the Thames.

**During another Zeppelin raid on 13 April, Bobby's pet dog 'Rip' met with a misfortune.**

" 'Rip' rushed out to bark at the guns and fell in the ditch that runs round the danger area. This ditch is full of peptic acid and the result was first that he was very sick and secondly that for months he was bright canary yellow. No amount of baths would take it off. It wasn't until he changed his coat in the autumn that he became white again. He really looked most peculiar.



## William Collins

Bill Collins was born into a working-class family in Croydon. He worked in a shop and as a gardener before joining the Royal Army Medical Corps as a stretcher bearer in 1913.

**On the western front, Sergeant William Collins was still serving with the No 1 Cavalry Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps. He noticed that an increasing number of wounds he encountered in treating patients were caused by high-explosive shells which spat out great chunks of steel shell casing.**

"The Germans had begun to use high-explosive shells instead of shrapnel. Very different – much more severe wounds. One of the worst I had to deal with was a private of one of the Yorkshire regiments. An HE shell had dropped right in among them and blown off both his legs, half way up the thigh, leaving the femurs exposed as if they were two crutches.

He sat upon the stretcher, looked down at his legs and said: "If only my missus could see me now! Give me a cigarette!" That was the guts and courage of those men. All we could do was to cover the wounds up with gauze, to keep the dirt and air away as much as possible, and put him on the first ambulance away.

The greatest danger to that man was shock. The wounds could be dealt with, but the shock to the body and the brain was the greatest danger. In seven or eight hours' time he'll get the reaction. The reaction would be immense. If he was exceptionally strong he might survive it.

**"The cabinet had concluded that the war could only be ended by fighting, and several were most anxious for a definite victory over German arms"**



## Sir Douglas Haig

General Sir Douglas Haig was commander of the British 1st Army. That already made him one of Britain's most senior soldiers, yet in December 1915 he had been promoted again, appointed to command the British Army on the western front.

**Meanwhile General Sir Douglas Haig, commander in chief of the British Expeditionary Force, was facing a time of great responsibility. Planning had begun for a massive offensive to be launched alongside the French in the Somme area of the western front. The Allied plans had already been disrupted by the surprise German attack on the French at Verdun in February 1916. Now Haig was checking with his political masters that they were indeed content for the attack to go ahead as planned. On 14 April he met the secretary of state for war, Lord Kitchener, and the chief of imperial general staff, General Sir William Robertson, at the War Office in London.**

"I asked them definitely: "Did His Majesty's government approve of my combining with the French in a general offensive during the summer?" They both agreed that all the cabinet had come to the conclusion that the war could only be ended by fighting, and several were most anxious for a definite victory over German arms.

**In making his plans, Haig was keen to exploit the potential of a new weapon developed in great secrecy – the tank.**

"I was told that 150 would be provided by 31 July. I said that was too late. Fifty were urgently required. Swinton is to see what can be done, and will also practise and train 'Tanks' and crews over obstacles and wire similar to the ground over which the attack will be made. I gave him a trench map as a guide and impressed on him the necessity for thinking over the system of leadership and control of a group of 'Tanks'.

**In the end Haig would be thwarted and, in fact, none at all would be made available until mid-September. His men would attack on 1 July without the benefit of support from the new tanks. [1]**

Peter Hart is the oral historian at the Imperial War Museum. His books include *Voices from the Front: An Oral History of the Great War* (Profile, 2015)

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# SHAKESPEARE

## THE HISTORIANS' VIEW

When did the actor, playwright and poet find fame? Was his marriage happy? How did he learn, write and die? And is there really any doubt that he was the author of the 'Shakespeare' plays? On the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, a panel of experts address the big questions about the life and work of England's best-known scribe

Complements the BBC's Shakespeare Festival on TV, radio and online





# RE

The 'Flower Portrait' of Shakespeare is inscribed with the date 1609, though analysis by National Portrait Gallery experts published in 2005 indicated that it was painted as late as the 19th century

## The panel



### Michael Dobson

is director of the Shakespeare Institute at the University of Birmingham, and co-editor of *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare* (OUP, 2015)



### Paul Edmondson

is head of research and knowledge at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and author of *Shakespeare: Ideas in Profile* (Profile Books, 2015)



### Laurie Maguire

is professor of English language and literature at Magdalen College, Oxford and co-author of *30 Great Myths About Shakespeare* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012)



**René Weis** is a Shakespeare expert based at University College London. He is the author of *Shakespeare Revealed: A Biography* (John Murray, 2007)





An illustration of a 16th-century grammar school, similar to that attended by Shakespeare. "You couldn't find a better course in the materials and skills a playwright would need," says Laurie Maguire

## Why do we seem to know so little about Shakespeare's private life?

**Michael Dobson:** I think 'seem' is the operative word here. In terms of his financial arrangements, provision for his family, baptism, marriage certificate, addresses, will, and other legal and economic matters, we know a great deal – far more than we know about most other people of the period. But we don't have Shakespeare's own musings about it because he isn't an autobiographical writer: he leaves his characters free to be themselves instead of using them as vehicles for editorialising or navel-gazing.

**René Weis:** We know rather more about Shakespeare than is commonly assumed, and there is at least one piquant anecdote about his private life from the period. This is recorded by the lawyer and diarist John Manningham, who reports that Shakespeare and [Richard] Burbage vied for the favours of the same woman when Burbage was playing

Richard III. Yet unlike Ben Jonson, who loves talking about himself, Shakespeare did not keep a commonplace book or diary – or at least none survives.

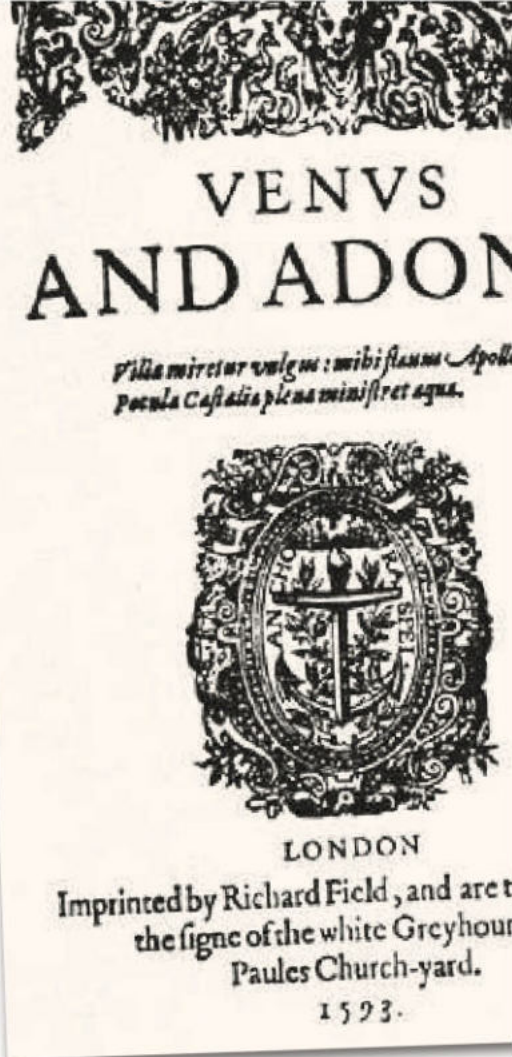
## How much did Shakespeare's early life and schooling influence his writing?

**Laurie Maguire:** By coincidence, the 'national curriculum' of the 16th-century grammar school provided an ideal regime for training future dramatists. It focused on dialogues, debates, flexibility of phrasing, rhetoric, Roman comedy – you couldn't find a better course in the materials and skills a playwright would need.

**Paul Edmondson:** Shakespeare was formed by Stratford-upon-Avon – its geography, customs, religious beliefs, economy and people. The classical, humanist education of the kind offered to the town's boys by its grammar school is writ large in his work. Every time he alludes to the work of the Roman poet Ovid, for example, or shapes a powerful speech with rhetorical devices, he is to some extent recalling his school days and the culture that formed him. Though Warwickshire words appear in his works (for example, 'batlet' for a laundry-paddle, and 'chimney-sweepers' for the seeded heads of dandelions), he is primarily a showman, writing about kings and nobles; he set more than half of his plays overseas.

## How happy was his marriage to Anne Hathaway?

**PE:** We know next to nothing about the Shakespeares' marriage except that they had to marry in a hurry in November 1582 (he was only 18; she was 26 or 27 and already pregnant.) They had three children: Susanna (1583–1649), then twins Hamnet (1585–96) and Judith (1585–1662). The death of their only son aged 11 would have been very keenly felt: Elizabethans always longed for strong



male heirs. New Place, the large, fine house that Shakespeare bought in 1597 (when he was only 33), was an impressive family home. *Sonnet 145*, probably his earliest surviving poem, seems to refer to Anne's surname ('hate away' for Hathaway). He and his wife probably enjoyed making poetry as well as love together.

**RW:** People have worried away at his marriage because Anne was almost certainly older than Shakespeare, allegedly a siren vamp trapping the 18-year-old Will and becoming pregnant. They obtained a special wedding licence to ensure that their first child, Susanna, would be legitimate. Then there is the business of the 'second-best bed' of Shakespeare's will, apparently the poet's final repudiation of his wife. And the *Sonnets* – assuming they contain at least a trace of real life – may suggest that the poet was romantically, and adulterously, attracted to both a glamorous young man and another woman in London.

**LM:** They were hardly a power couple, and it seems they may not have been a happy couple. Though Shakespeare returned to Stratford annually, and retired there, there's evidence that he kept his wife short of money during his absences in London. I am very persuaded by Shakespeare expert Katherine Duncan-Jones's interpretation of events following the death of the Shakespeares' son, Hamnet, in

"The Sonnets may suggest that the poet was attracted to a young man and another woman in London"

René Weis





NIS

to be sold at  
and in



LEFT: The title page of Shakespeare's poem *Venus and Adonis*, published in 1593 while London's playhouses were closed due to a plague outbreak. ABOVE: This drawing, made in 1708 and probably traced from a 16th-century original, is the only surviving image that may depict Anne Hathaway

1596. Most couples would have attempted to conceive another heir; Duncan-Jones thinks that they did not do so because conjugal relations had long ceased.

#### What do you think Shakespeare was doing during his so-called 'lost years' of 1578-82 and 1585-92?

**RW:** There is no colourable evidence to place Shakespeare anywhere other than in Stratford-upon-Avon before 1592, when he was accused of plagiarism by a jealous rival in London. The antiquary John Aubrey reported that Shakespeare "in his younger years" had been "a schoolmaster in the country", while at the same time noting that acting and poetry were in Shakespeare's blood and that he probably fetched up in London as a jobbing actor at the age of 18. None of this is as plausible as him staying put as a glover in the family business until he had to leave Warwickshire.

**PE:** I don't believe in the 'lost years'; the phrase is nothing more than a biographical construct. Typical lives in Shakespeare's time contain many gaps. From around 1578, Shakespeare may have started his apprenticeship, as most boys of his age and class did. He should have taken up his trade when he came of age in 1585, but his prospects changed with his much-too-early marriage. For the next 10 years he was making his way in the world as

a freelancer, and finding his feet – perhaps helping out at the Stratford grammar school, assisting with his father's wool-dealing, and starting to visit London.

#### How and why did Shakespeare choose to become an actor and writer?

**MD:** We don't know – again, because he wrote plays rather than memoirs. We do know, though, how he became famous. At a key early stage in his career as an actor and scriptwriter, the London playhouses were closed during an outbreak of plague. With financial support from the Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare published a narrative poem, *Venus and Adonis* (1593). It isn't his best-known work today, but it was easily his most popular printed work in his own time.

An elegant, compassionate but very funny piece of literary soft pornography – mostly consisting of the goddess Venus's successive panting, voluptuous but futile rhetorical attempts to persuade the sulky youth Adonis to have sex with her – it made Shakespeare's name overnight. He quickly followed it up with the tragic poem *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), and when the theatres reopened he was no longer just one more freelance hack but an established author. As a result, he was able to become a shareholder in the pre-eminent theatre company of the time, the Lord Chamberlain's Men. As a manager as well as an actor and a

"Shakespeare was fascinated by identity, the power of imagination to transform selves and worlds"

Laurie Maguire

playwright he was able to exert artistic control over the development of his dramatic talent as could no other theatrical writer of his time.

**PE:** Shakespeare probably started acting when he was very young because he realised he was good at it. He was just five when Stratford-upon-Avon first welcomed professional actors to perform there, visits authorised by his father, who was then bailiff. To act is to imagine, and Shakespeare's young imagination seems also to have seized the opportunities for freedom that creative writing provides. When he started working in London, he probably began by frequenting the fashionable playhouses, and started to act and write professionally with friends he made there.

**LM:** Does one 'choose' such things? Shakespeare was fascinated by identity, the power of imagination to transform selves and worlds. Drama is a natural home for such explorations.

#### What do we know of Shakespeare's process when writing his plays?

**RW:** The plays may hold universal appeal but they were conceived and written for money over a period of around 20 years, from c1590 to 1613. In contemporary texts based on Shakespeare's manuscripts, the name of the actor playing a particular role is sometimes given instead of the part, showing quite how familiar Shakespeare was with the rest of his company. He also used sources extensively. Whole passages of *Henry V* and *Antony and Cleopatra* were demonstrably written with Holinshed and Plutarch open on his desk. Increasingly, scholars believe that Shakespeare wrote most of his post-1597 plays at New Place in Stratford.

**MD:** We have no eyewitness reports of his methods, other than the tribute to his fluency made by his fellow-actors Heminge and Condell in their preface to the *First Folio*. It's



worth pointing out, though, that unlike many other playwrights of the time, who usually worked in collaboration, Shakespeare did both the breaking down of his stories into scenes and the writing of the dialogue. His plays vary in terms of the pre-planning involved: some, like *Romeo and Juliet* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, follow a minutely worked-out timetable of events, whereas for others – such as *Hamlet* and *As You Like It* – Shakespeare seems to have had a well-known story open in front of him and improvised his own theatrical variation on it as he went along.

**Many people assert that Shakespeare didn't write the plays attributed to him. Is there any substance to this claim?**

**MD:** There isn't a serious dispute about whether Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare's plays, any more than there is a serious dispute about whether Nasa really managed to land astronauts on the moon. Since the mid-19th century there have been various evidence-free conspiracy theories – some attributing the plays to aristocrats who were dead before many of the plays were even written. But since everybody in Elizabethan and Jacobean England who said anything on the subject said that Shakespeare's plays and poems were written by the famous and well-documented William Shakespeare of Stratford, and since absolutely nobody said they weren't, I'm inclined to go along with the unanimous testimony of the contemporary eyewitnesses.

**LM:** Such claims fail to understand how the creative imagination actually works. Some argue that someone who wasn't a lawyer could not write about the law (therefore Shakespeare was Bacon), that someone who wasn't an aristocrat could not write about the court (therefore Shakespeare was the Earl of Oxford). Shakespeare wrote sensitively about women – does that mean he was really a female?

**How famous was Shakespeare in his own lifetime?**

**LM:** He was famous for his non-dramatic poems. His theatre company, the King's Men, was famous for its plays, and so was he – but probably not more than other major writers who also wrote for the King's Men, such as Middleton, Jonson or, later, Fletcher.

**RW:** By 1597, roughly the period of the *Henry IV* plays, he was wealthy enough to buy one of the largest private manor houses within the jurisdiction of Stratford. Ben Jonson did not praise easily but, in his paean to Shakespeare in the *First Folio*, he elevated his friend to the status of mythic genius, ranking him above his English peers and next to the great classical



“There is no reason to believe that early in Shakespeare's career he was having his portrait drawn with vegetables”

Michael Dobson

ABOVE: In 2015, *Country Life* published a claim that this illustration on the title page of *The Herball*, a 16th-century book on plants, depicts William Shakespeare

dramatists. He claimed that the “sweet swan of Avon”, the “star of poets”, was “not of an age but for all time”.

**What do you think was the most likely cause of Shakespeare's death?**

**RW:** Typhoid. In 1662 the Reverend John Ward reported that Shakespeare had died of a ‘fever’ contracted while carousing with Drayton and Jonson. Ward must have known Shakespeare's younger daughter Judith, who lived near him and died in 1662; he alludes to her in his diary. So his reference to ‘fever’ may not only reflect local lore but may derive from Judith Shakespeare-Quiney herself. We know from Shakespeare's son-in-law John Hall that typhoid, known then as the ‘new fever’ or the ‘spotted fever’, was particularly virulent in Warwickshire in 1615–16.

**Does the picture ‘discovered’ last year and announced in *Country Life* really depict Shakespeare?**

**MD:** I am serenely confident that it does not. There is no sensible reason for believing that, early in Shakespeare's career, he was having his portrait drawn with vegetables to ornament the title page of a gardening manual. It's just some ingenious wishful thinking.

**Why do you think Shakespeare's plays are still so admired today?**

**LM:** The plays are untypical of the time in their depiction of psychological aspects. Middleton and Jonson dramatised types and caricatures but Shakespeare always tried to see beyond the stereotype. This is the heart of Shylock's anguished speech in which he asks to be seen as a human, not merely pigeonholed as a Jew: “If you prick us, do we not bleed?” Shakespeare's plays show *people* – people falling in love, having children, trying to make a go of a situation. These are transhistorical and transcultural concerns – the human heart doesn't change.

**RW:** Shakespeare's plays live and breathe theatre and dramatic timing. They burst at the seams with rhetorical energy. Some of the magnetism of Shakespeare derives from his extraordinary language. Part of this is due to the pervasive influence of the English Bible and the way the greatest moral and spiritual questions were, for the first time, posed in the vernacular. *Hamlet*, for example, resonates with biblical lines and dilemmas. Shakespeare's metaphors and similes rarely cease to jolt us by their aptness and by the novel perspectives they afford on familiar human experiences.

**Is it accurate to describe Shakespeare as England's greatest literary figure?**

**MD:** Yes – though I think it would be parochial to do so, and above all else Shakespeare's writings aren't parochial. He belongs to the world.

**LM:** It is tricky to speak of art in absolutes, but it is true to say that Shakespeare's plays have been performed in a great many countries in most centuries – that sounds like greatness to me! The enthusiastic reception of Shakespeare's Globe's production of *Hamlet* (which visited every country in the world 2014–16) illustrates this point perfectly.

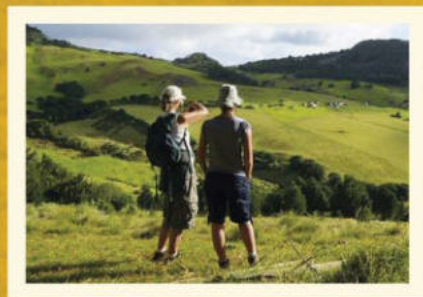
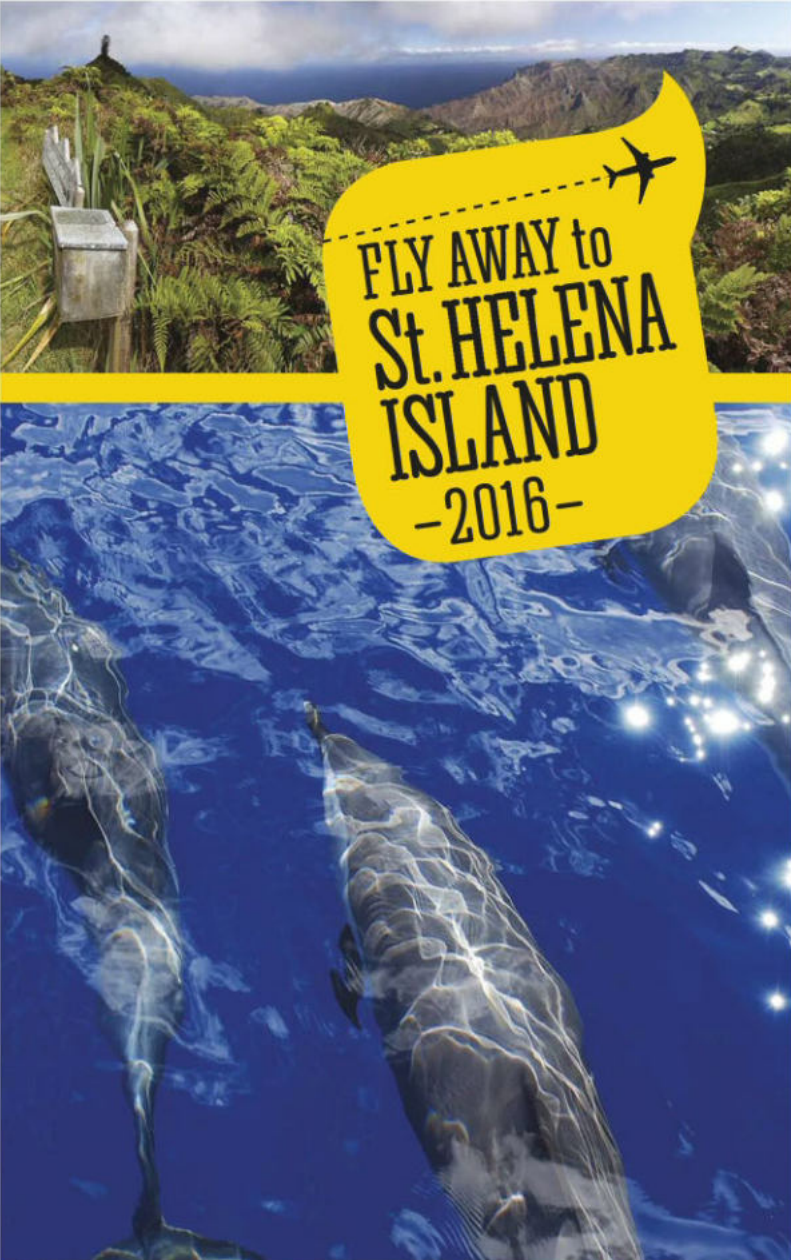
**PE:** That would be to insult many other great English writers. Shakespeare is one of the greatest who happens to have become an international currency through the endless translatability of his writing. He is also one of the handful of humans whose names have become a sort of shorthand for the phenomenon of genius itself. **H**

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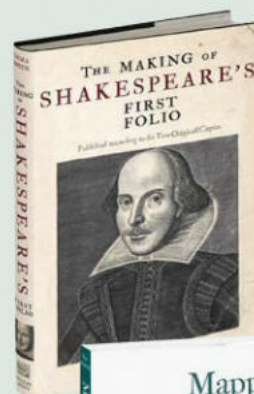
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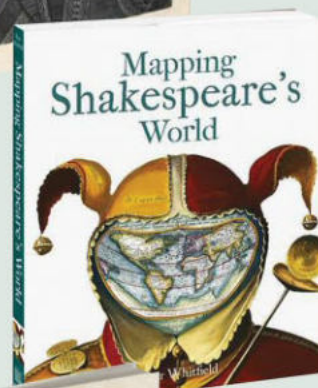
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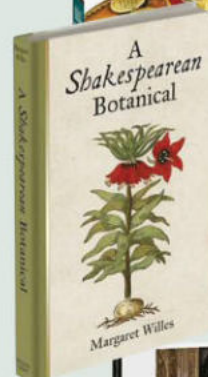
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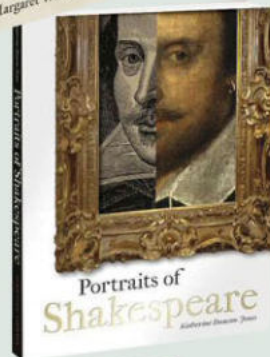
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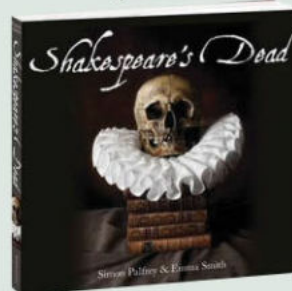
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## Shakespeare's plays

Lord Ronald Gower's statues of Shakespeare and the future Henry V, who is trying on a crown. Shakespeare's *Henry V* play is ostensibly a celebration of the exploits of a young and virile king. But was it also a coded attack on England's elderly and infirm reigning queen?





# HOW SHAKESPEARE REWROTE HISTORY

Shakespeare's history plays were influenced every bit as much by contemporary events as episodes from the past. **Jerry Brotton** reveals how eight of Shakespeare's works reflected political crises of the day - much to the ire of Queen Elizabeth's censors

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## HENRY VI, PART 1

### England bleeds again

The military reversals dramatised in *Henry VI, Part 1* would have been all too familiar to Shakespeare's audience

In the early 1590s an exciting young playwright called William Shakespeare burst onto the Elizabethan theatre scene with three popular plays about the Lancastrian king Henry VI (1421–71) and the civil discord that eventually culminated in the accession of the Yorkist Richard III in 1483. The cycle catalogues the young king's weakness and how, as Shakespeare wrote later in *Henry V*, "so many had the managing" of his state that "they lost France and made his England bleed".

The action in *Henry VI, Part 1* is driven by the wars in France and the contrast between the heroic Lord John Talbot (c1387–1453) and the French warrior Jeanne la Pucelle, known in Britain as Joan of Arc (1412–31). They fight over various French cities, including Rouen, which changed hands in 1418–19.

In the play, the English soldiers "sit before the walls of Rouen". That historical siege displayed direct parallels with events that were taking place as Shakespeare wrote his play. In 1589 Elizabeth sent an army to France to oppose the Catholic League and support the Huguenot king Henry IV. During the winter of 1591–92 the English forces besieged Rouen, but political confusion, military mismanagement and disease led to the abandonment of the siege, with huge loss of English life and disillusionment with the whole campaign. No wonder the three parts of *Henry VI* were so successful: they were effectively military and political reportage of current events, as well as broader reflections on pre-Tudor English history.



Fiona Shaw plays Richard II in a 1995 production. The play ponders the justifications for deposing a monarch, a topic too contentious for Queen Elizabeth's censors

### RICHARD II

## Scripting sedition

Was Shakespeare's *Richard II* a thinly veiled swipe at the ageing Queen Elizabeth?

In 1595 Shakespeare began work on a second tetralogy of English history plays covering a period even earlier than his previous series. His new cycle began with *Richard II* (1367–1400), and ended in 1420, five years after Henry V's triumph at the battle of Agincourt.

Today *Richard II* is often performed as the tragedy of the downfall of a querulous poet-king who belatedly discovers his humanity after his deposition at the hands of Henry Bolingbroke, the future King Henry IV. But in the mid-1590s it engaged in a politically dangerous debate on the rights and wrongs of overthrowing a legitimate monarch. As Bolingbroke prepares to depose Richard, the bishop of Carlisle asks: "What subject can give sentence on his king?"

When the play was first printed in 1597 the climactic deposition scene was missing, suggesting that Elizabeth's censors deemed it too provocative. Inviting parallels between the weak Richard and the elderly Elizabeth in the 1590s was certainly dangerous. Others, such as the historian John Hayward, were arrested for comparing Elizabeth's former favourite Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, to Henry IV. On the eve of Essex's rebellion against the queen, his supporters paid Shakespeare's company to perform a play about *Richard II* at the Globe Theatre, to show the righteousness of deposing a monarch like Richard – for example, Elizabeth. Though the performance did not have the desired effect of inciting rebellion, a subsequent anecdote claimed that Elizabeth knew exactly how her enemies saw her, saying: "I am Richard II, know ye not that?"

### THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

## Jews in the firing line

The *Merchant of Venice* mirrors the dark fate of Elizabeth's personal physician

Written around 1596, *The Merchant of Venice* remains one of Shakespeare's most controversial plays. Modern audiences understand it as being about Shylock, a Jewish moneylender living in Venice, though its title actually refers to his Christian adversary, the Venetian merchant Antonio. It is called a comedy but revels in attacking Jews, with Shylock pursuing the murderous settlement of a bond that enables him to take a "pound of flesh" from Antonio's body.

Shakespeare's interest in Shylock might seem odd, considering that Jews had been officially expelled from England in 1290 and were only readmitted under Cromwell in 1656. Yet a small number of Jews did live in Elizabethan London, inspiring several plays that influenced Shakespeare, including Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (1589–90).

But Shakespeare probably knew more about Jews from England's trade with Morocco, conducted almost

exclusively through Jewish intermediaries. Perhaps the greatest influence on the play was the public execution in 1594 of Elizabeth I's personal physician, Dr Roderigo Lopez, a Portuguese-born Jewish convert to Protestantism, convicted of treason for allegedly trying to poison the queen. Before he was executed, it was reported that he said "he loved the queen as well as he loved Jesus Christ; which coming from a man of the Jewish profession moved no small laughter in the standers-by".

The cruel but uneasy laughter that accompanied Lopez's death permeates Shakespeare's play. Shylock calls his bond with Antonio "a merry sport", and though his famous speech "Hath not a Jew eyes?" inspires sympathy, its conclusion is somewhat darker: "If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute." Perhaps the Christians are more of a problem than the Jews.

Henry Urwick plays Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, a play that "revels in attacking Jews"



By comparing the Earl of Essex, shown in a 1599 portrait, to Henry V, Shakespeare was playing a risky game



HENRY V

## The disgrace of Essex

*Henry V* was written at a time when another, less accomplished military leader floundered in Ireland

Shakespeare's second tetralogy ended with *Henry V* – and also nearly got him into hot water, again involving the troublesome Earl of Essex. The play dramatises the reign of Henry V (1386–1422), depicting his victories at the siege of Harfleur and battle of Agincourt in 1415, and his famous rallying cry of “God for Harry, England, and Saint George!” But at the time it was written, in late 1599, the aged Queen Elizabeth was under pressure to name a successor, and struggling with rebellion in Ireland. In spring 1599 she sent the Earl of Essex to defeat the Irish. The campaign was a disaster, and the disgraced Essex returned to London. Arrested in

September 1599, he was executed after a botched uprising in 1601.

In *Henry V*'s penultimate Chorus speech, probably written as London awaited news of Essex's Irish campaign, Shakespeare made his only reference to contemporary political events, comparing Henry V to Essex, “the general of our gracious empress”, “from Ireland coming”, and bringing “rebellion broached on his sword”. Was this an endorsement of Essex and a criticism of Elizabeth? We may never know because the rebellion failed. But writing a play about a virile young monarch when Essex was challenging the authority of an elderly queen was certainly a risky move.

## OTHELLO

## Fear of the Moors

Was *Othello* modelled on a Moroccan ambassador to the English court?

Subtitled ‘The Moor of Venice’, *Othello* is one of Shakespeare's greatest high tragedies, written either just before or after Queen Elizabeth's death and King James VI and I's accession in 1603. The play contained highly topical resonances for its English audience. ‘Moors’ came from Mauretania (as Iago says), in what's now Morocco, and inspired both racial and religious anxieties for Elizabethans.

The region was predominantly Muslim, under the control of the Sa'adian dynasty. Elizabeth allied herself with Morocco, establishing the Barbary Company to trade English munitions for sugar (which wreaked such havoc on her teeth). In the summer of 1600 the Moroccan ambassador Muhammad al-Annuri and his retinue arrived in London and stayed for six months, negotiating treaties with Elizabeth. Al-Annuri, rumoured to be a Morisco (a Spanish-born Muslim forced to convert to Christianity, but who in this case then reverted) even had his portrait painted.

Was al-Annuri the model for Othello? Shakespeare's Othello describes himself in ambiguous terms, speaking “Of being taken by the insolent foe”, which we assume to be the Ottomans, and then of being “sold to slavery”; his “redemption thence” suggests his conversion to Christianity. But by the end of the play, after killing Desdemona, he compares himself to “a malignant and a turbaned Turk”. His identity is clearly far more complex than that of being simply ‘black’, and suggests how conflicted the Elizabethans felt about the Muslim world.

## MACBETH

## A war on Catholics

*Macbeth* reflected the paranoia of London in the aftermath of the gunpowder plot

The ‘Scottish play’ is perhaps Shakespeare's most topical. James VI of Scotland's accession to the English throne led Shakespeare to consult the historian Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1587). He rewrote Holinshed's story of Macbeth's murder of Scottish king Duncan and the role of the witches in his downfall, while celebrating the importance of Banquo, from whom it was believed James was descended.

The king had written a book about his belief in witchcraft, called *Daemonologie* (1597), so

he was probably delighted to watch a play showing “weird” witches that “trade and traffic with Macbeth / In riddles and affairs of death”.

But Shakespeare also exploited London's tense atmosphere following the unsuccessful gunpowder plot of November 1605. One of the executed conspirators was the Jesuit father Henry Garnet, who had written a book on equivocation, directing Catholics to give misleading or ambiguous answers if arrested by the Protestant authorities. Many

regarded equivocation as a sign of Catholicism's duplicity.

It's an idea that suffuses Shakespeare's play. Macbeth condemns the witches as spirits who “palter [equivocate] with us in a double sense”. Immediately after Duncan's murder the porter answers the knocking at the castle's gates by saying: “Here's an equivocator,” someone “who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven.” This alludes to Garnet's presumed failure to argue his way into heaven.





Romans attempt to make peace with the famously authoritarian Coriolanus in a 14th-century illumination

## CORIANUS

## Death before starvation

Class conflict looms large in the tale of the Roman warrior Coriolanus

The central character of Shakespeare's last Roman play, usually dated 1608, is the semi-mythic Roman general Caius Martius, who took the name Coriolanus after his siege of the Volscian city of Corioli. Coriolanus is a warrior who tries and fails to forge a political career, and is banished from Rome.

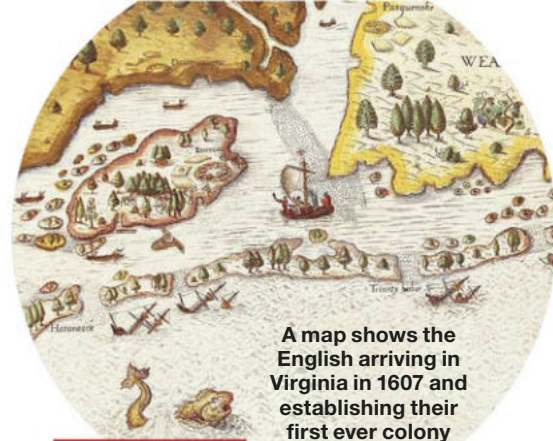
Shakespeare took his story from the Greek historian Plutarch, but deviated from his source to write a play obsessed with food, starvation, blood and bodies. The reasons for this were closer to home than ancient Rome. In spring 1607, with rocketing corn prices, the fear of famine and the escalating enclosure of common land, more than 5,000 protestors rioted across the Midlands, including Shakespeare's home county, Warwickshire.

King James brutally crushed the rebellion, hanging its ringleaders, but the Midlands Rising – just one of the

more significant rural rebellions throughout the late Elizabethan and Jacobean period – exposed a faultline running throughout English society that found its expression in *Coriolanus*. The first act opens with mutinous armed citizens "resolved rather to die than to famish". When the patricians enter, the citizens protest they "ne'er cared for us yet; suffer us to famish, and their storehouses crammed with grain".

One of the senators tries to calm the citizens with the famous 'belly fable', arguing that all parts of the body need to work together. When Coriolanus enters he condemns the rebels as "fragments" of uneaten food.

Such class conflict would only intensify throughout the Jacobean and Caroline period, and came to define the battles between royalists and republicans in the 1640s.



A map shows the English arriving in Virginia in 1607 and establishing their first ever colony

## THE TEMPEST

## Brave new world

*The Tempest* may have been inspired by English forays to the Americas

Written in late 1610 or 1611, *The Tempest* is often regarded as Shakespeare's farewell to the stage, in which he announces "now my charms are all o'erthrown". It is a strange, unclassifiable play about Prospero, the deposed Duke of Milan (seen as Shakespeare's self-portrait) who, set adrift on a boat, finds his way to an island where he uses magic to engineer the marriage of his daughter Miranda to Ferdinand, heir to the kingdom of Naples.

The play's ethereal atmosphere belies its acute political contexts. There is a colonial dimension to Prospero's relations with the island's compliant Ariel, who begs for "freedom", and with the rebellious Caliban, whom Prospero calls "this thing of darkness I acknowledge mine". The colonial element seems to have been inspired by pamphlets written in 1610 describing an English fleet shipwrecked in Bermuda – Ariel's 'still-vexed Bermudas' – en route to the fledgling Jamestown colony in Virginia. This suggests that the play is set in what it calls the "brave new world" of the Americas.

In 1613 the play was performed as part of royal celebrations for the eagerly anticipated marriage of King James's daughter Elizabeth to the Protestant Frederick, the Elector Palatine. *The Tempest* also contains a masque that Prospero calls a "contract of true love to celebrate" Miranda and Ferdinand's nuptials.

Though not necessarily written for the marriage, the play seems to reflect the belief that dynastic marriages could establish peace and security within Europe. It was a forlorn hope: in under a decade, Shakespeare was dead and the Palatinate dispute led to the horrors of the Thirty Years' War. ■

Jerry Brotton is the author of *This Orient Isle: Elizabethan England and the Islamic World*, which is published by Allen Lane in March

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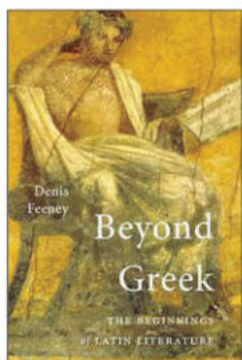
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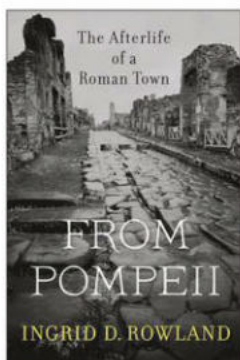
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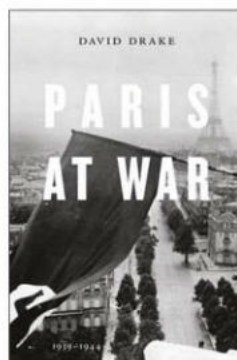
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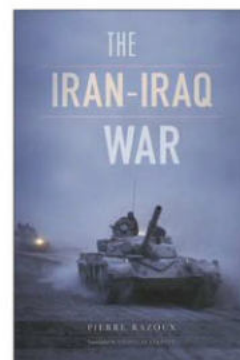
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# LONDON SHAKES STIR

Houses collapsed, sheep ran wild, Westminster Abbey shook and the people trembled in fear of armageddon.

**Andrew Robinson** describes what happened when a series of earthquakes rocked London in 1750

Just after 12.30pm on 8 February 1750, Britain's lord chancellor was sitting in Westminster Hall with the Courts of King's Bench and Chancery when the room began to shake. For a moment everyone thought the great edifice was going to collapse on their heads.

In Lincoln's Inn Fields, meanwhile, Newcastle House trembled so much that the Duke of Newcastle sent out his servant to enquire what had happened from a neighbour, the physicist Gowin Knight. The servant found Knight busy investigating the signs of disturbance in his own residence, including a bed that had moved.

In Gray's Inn, a lamp-lighter very nearly fell from his ladder. At Leicester House, home of the Prince of Wales, the foundations were believed to be sinking. Throughout the City and Westminster, people felt their desks lurch, chairs shook, doors slammed, windows

rattled and crockery clattered on its shelves. In Leadenhall Street, part of a chimney fell. In Southwark, south of the Thames, a slaughterhouse with a hay-loft collapsed.

Little did they know it, but Londoners were being shaken and stirred by the first of several earthquakes that would strike England that year. Although small – with an estimated magnitude of just 2.6, according to today's British Geological Survey – the epicentre of the 8 February quake was shallow and centred beneath the capital, apparently around London Bridge. So the city received a considerable jolt.

This wasn't the first, nor the last, year in which the earth would move under London. In 1580, an earthquake beneath the English Channel collapsed part of the white cliffs at Dover, killed two children in London, rang the great bell in the Palace of Westminster and was referred to in William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. In 1692, another thronged the streets of London with confused crowds.

A third quake, with its epicentre at nearby Colchester, rattled the Houses of Parliament in 1884. Puzzled MPs were halted in their tracks, jolted against walls or felt papers and briefcases jerked from their hands. They suspected a Guy Fawkes-style explosion, perhaps set off by the notorious Dynamiters then being prosecuted for their Irish nationalist activities.

But it was 1750, the so-called 'Year of Earthquakes' that triggered a country-wide obsession with seismic events and kick-started the scientific study of the subject. So, strange as it is to report, seismology began not in seismic California or Japan but in stable Britain.

At first, an earthquake was not accepted as an explanation for the 8 February tremor – so improbable did it appear to be. London's 1692 shock was too distant to be remembered. Instead, there were theories about cannon-fire and exploding powder magazines. Then it was said that Isaac Newton, before his death in 1727, had predicted the jolt by calculating that



# DON IN AND RRED

Jupiter would approach close to Earth in 1750. Within two or three weeks, Londoners began to forget the strange experience.

Almost exactly four weeks after the first shock, at 5:30am on 8 March, came the second. It was more pronounced, and covered five times the area – a circle with a diameter of 40 miles, with its centre roughly three miles north of London Bridge. Two houses in Whitechapel collapsed, and several chimneys fell in various parts of London, as did stones from the new towers of Westminster Abbey.

## Violent vibration

Horace Walpole, man of letters and politician, was in bed in central London. Three days later, he reported to a friend: “On a sudden I felt my bolster lift up my head; I thought somebody was getting from under my bed, but soon found it was a strong earthquake, that lasted near half a minute, with a violent vibration and great roaring. I rang my bell; my servant came in, frightened out of his senses: in an instant we heard all the windows in the neighbourhood flung up. I got up and found people running into the streets, but saw no mischief done: there has been some; two old houses flung down, several chimneys, and much china-ware.”

The president of the Royal Society, antiquarian Martin Folkes, was also in

“This frantic terror prevails so much,” reported Horace Walpole, “that women **sit outdoors all night wearing earthquake gowns**”

Londoners flee the city during the earthquake panic of April 1750



bed. Reporting to the society that very day, he noted that the vibration and noise could not have been that of a passing cart or coach – to which many compared it – because everything was quiet at such an early hour. He remarked that the shock had been felt on the outskirts of London: “I sent a servant out about 7 o’clock, and he met a countryman, who was bringing a load of hay from beyond Highgate, and who was on the other side of the town when the shock happened; he did not, he said, feel it, as he was driving his waggon; but that the people he saw in the town of Highgate were all greatly surprised, saying they had had their houses very much shocked, and that the chairs in some were thrown about in their rooms.”

Near Holland House, in west London, the bailiff of Henry Fox, while counting his sheep, observed the dry, solid ground move like a quagmire or quicksand, causing much alarm among the animals and some crows nesting in nearby trees. In *A History of British Earthquakes*, Charles Davison notes that “cats started up, dogs howled, sheep ran about, a horse refused to drink, the water being so much agitated, in several ponds fish leaped out of the water and were seen to dart away in all directions”.

A slight tremor occurred on 9 March, and then came a powerful rumour: a third shock, exactly a month after the second one, would



## Quakes that shaped history

### Lisbon, 1755 ▾

A seismic event that dealt Portugal's empire a grievous blow

The sudden destruction of Lisbon by an earthquake and tsunami in 1755 exerted an influence on 18th-century Europe as far-reaching as the obliteration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by atomic bombs in the 20th century. This is epitomised by Voltaire's 1759 novel, *Candide*, satirising religious explanations of the disaster and the philosophy of optimism.

By the 19th century, images of a shaking Lisbon were icons of natural disaster comparable with the smothering of Pompeii and Herculaneum by

the eruption of Vesuvius. In Portugal, the devastation accelerated the long-term decline of the country in Europe and the colonial world, which had been caused by its over-reliance on gold revenues from its colony Brazil and what many saw as the pernicious influence of Jesuit orthodoxy. Although Lisbon was gradually, and impressively, rebuilt under the near-dictatorship of the marquess of Pombal, the country continued to weaken economically, especially after Brazil gained its independence in 1822.



A crowd congregates around a damaged building in the Mission area of San Francisco in 1906. The Californian city recovered from the earthquake remarkably quickly

João Glaes's allegorical painting of the Lisbon earthquake, in which 30,000–40,000 people died in the city alone

swallow up London. The rumour was started by an army trooper who would eventually be despatched to Bedlam, London's lunatic asylum. By 4 April, doomsday had somehow advanced to the very next day, and panic took hold. "This frantic terror prevails so much, that within these three days 730 coaches have been counted passing Hyde Park corner, with whole parties removing into the country," reported a sceptical Walpole. "Several women have made earthquake gowns; that is, warm gowns to sit out of doors all tonight."

### Superstitious fears

That Walpole was not exaggerating is confirmed by the 'Historical Chronicle' of April published in the monthly *Gentleman's Magazine*. For 4 April, this reads: "Incredible numbers of people, being under strong apprehensions that London and Westminster would be visited with another and more fatal earthquake... left their houses, and walked in

the fields, or lay in boats all night; many people of fashion in the neighbouring villages sat in their coaches till daybreak; others went to a greater distance, so that the roads were never more thronged, and lodgings were hardly to be procured at Windsor; so far, and even to their wits' end, had their superstitious fears, or their guilty conscience, driven them."

Part of the blame must undoubtedly fall on

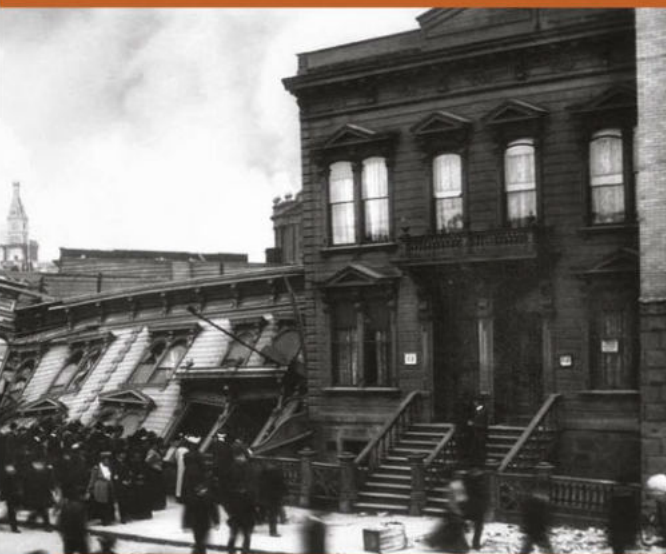
"In several ponds fish **leaped out of the water and were seen to dart away** in all directions," noted Charles Davison

the activities of religious preachers during March. Charles Wesley, a founder of the growing Methodist movement, bluntly sermonised: "God is himself the Author, and sin is the moral cause."

A leading clergyman, William Whiston, successor to Newton as Lucasian professor of mathematics at Cambridge University, expressed his belief that the end of the world was close at hand, as predicted by 99 signals. No 92 was that there would occur a terrible – but, to good men, a joyful – earthquake, which would destroy one tenth of an eminent city. Given his standing in London society, Whiston's ideas were seriously discussed.

But it was the warnings of the bishop of London, Thomas Sherlock, that attracted the most attention. Sherlock's *A Letter to the Clergy and Inhabitants of London and Westminster... on Occasion of the Late Earthquakes* apparently sold 10,000 copies in two days, was reprinted several times, and is said to have sold more





## San Francisco, 1906 ^

An economic powerhouse rose from the rubble of this natural disaster

The fire that destroyed three-quarters of San Francisco over three days in 1906 was started by an earthquake that disabled the water supply of the city, including its fire hydrants. San Francisco recovered remarkably quickly, largely because the city authorities, local businesses and even the insurance industry treated the disaster as incendiary rather than seismic, so that residents were permitted to claim on their fire insurance and investors were not discouraged from financing reconstruction through fear of future earthquakes. And no attempt was made to introduce anti-seismic emergency and building regulations.

Within a decade, San Francisco was rebuilt and its economy was expanding. In the 1950s, it spawned the nearby industrial area, today known as Silicon Valley, also located on the San Andreas fault. The 1906 San Francisco earthquake became history's leading example of how a great earthquake can trigger the 'creative destruction' of a city.

## Caracas, 1812 v

Did Venezuela's agony lead to a political revolution?

An earthquake in Venezuela in 1812 destroyed much of the country's buildings including those of its capital, Caracas. The damage happened to be worst in the areas controlled by Simón Bolívar's recently proclaimed First Republic of Venezuela and relatively light in areas sympathetic to the colonial ruler, Spain – a fact immediately exploited by the local Catholic authorities, who supported Spain.

By Bolívar's own admission, the earthquake directly precipitated the

republic's collapse four months later under attack by Spanish forces. Captured by the Spanish, Bolívar was sent into exile, and settled in Cartagena. There he unexpectedly became the leader of a much wider independence movement than the one he had led in Venezuela. So, indirectly, the 1812 Caracas earthquake may have led to the birth of new South American nations – through Bolívar's liberation of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela and Peru from Spanish rule in the 1820s.

The Caracas earthquake – shown in a 20th-century painting by Tito Salas – led to the birth of a new South America



than 100,000 copies in less than six months. Sherlock urged his readers to repent, and to ignore "little philosophers, who see a little, and but very little into natural causes... not considering that God who made all things, never put anything out of his own power".

When London failed to fall, there was a general air of sheepishness in society. Many people simply blanked the earthquakes from their memory, and no attempt was made to protect London's buildings from future shocks.

Natural philosophers, however, remained fascinated. At this time, despite Newton's achievements in understanding the solar system, the science of the Earth had advanced no further than the musings of the ancient Greeks such as Aristotle, who postulated a 'central fire' inside underground caverns, which then collapsed, generating earthquakes. By the year's end, almost 50 articles and letters on the subject had been read before the Royal Society, which were promptly published as an

appendix to its *Philosophical Transactions*.

One of the society's fellows was John Michell, a Cambridge astronomer who had a remarkable range of interests, including geology. During the 1750s, Michell examined eyewitness reports from England in 1750 and from the devastating Lisbon earthquake in 1755, and analysed them according to Newtonian mechanics. His important if flawed paper, 'Conjectures Concerning the Cause and Observations upon the Phaenomena of Earthquakes', published in the *Philosophical Transactions* for 1760, correctly concluded that earthquakes were "waves set up by shifting masses of rock miles below the surface" – although his explanation for this shifting relied wrongly on explosions of steam, as underground water encountered underground fires. There were two types of earthquake wave, he said: a "tremulous" vibration within the Earth, followed by an undulation of the Earth's surface – once again coming close to the truth.

Despite being a clergyman, Michell boldly left the divine out of his analysis: the first thinker about earthquakes to do so since the ancient Greeks. Thus, the English 'Year of Earthquakes' led to the first recognisably scientific steps in understanding this influential, but still embarrassingly unpredictable, phenomenon. **H**

Andrew Robinson's most recent book, *Earth-Shattering Events: Earthquakes, Nations and Civilization*, is published by Thames & Hudson this month

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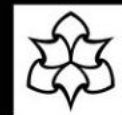
#### BOOK

► **A History of British Earthquakes** by Charles Davison (CUP, 1924)

#### TALK

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# IRONSIDE

## ANGLO-SAXON WARRIOR KING



Edmund II – better known as Edmund Ironside – shown in a 14th-century manuscript. Ironside was renowned for valour in battle, but his death robbed England of its chance to expel Cnut and the Danes

One thousand years after he became king, **Sarah Foot** recounts the life of a bold leader who took the fight to the Vikings in one of the most blood-soaked periods in English history



**F**ew Anglo-Saxon leaders who went to war with the Vikings in the early years of the 11th century emerged with their reputations enhanced. King Edmund II, who ruled the English for seven tempestuous months in 1016, was one of those who did.

Such was Edmund's reputed martial prowess that chroniclers were still celebrating his exploits more than a century after his death. Writing in the 12th century, the Anglo-Norman poet Geoffrey Gaimar described Edmund as "bold as a leopard".

Another 12th-century chronicler lauded Edmund's leadership skills. And so impressed were Edmund's immediate successors by his valour on the battlefield that they gave him the epithet by which he has been best remembered ever since – 'Ironside'.

Yet, when Edmund was born in the late 10th century he was an unlikely candidate to earn himself an enduring reputation as a mighty warrior-king. In fact, he was an unlikely candidate to become a king at all.

That's because Edmund was born the third son of English king Æthelred ('the Unready') and his first wife, Ælfgifu.

And so, while his two older siblings were being groomed for power, Edmund was free to lead what it seems was a rather colourful life – one that saw him clash with his father on a number of occasions.

We're told that King Æthelred intervened to prevent Edmund from appropriating an estate from the church at Sherborne in Dorset, even going as far as making the prince pay £20 for the privilege of having the use of the land for his lifetime. Worse still, when Edmund married the widow of one of his friends, he did so "against the king's will", as a near-contemporary chronicler put it.

## Threat to security

These family disagreements were played out against a backdrop of the most violent and protracted warfare seen in early medieval England, as Danish armies, led first by King Swein and then his son Cnut, sought to conquer the realm.

Not since the days of Alfred the Great had England's peace and security been so threatened. But unlike Alfred, King Æthelred was woefully unable to mount an effective resistance to the Viking attacks. In fact, the English were so comprehensively out-fought and outmaneuvered by the Danes that, in 1013, they bowed to the seemingly inevitable and submitted to Swein as king. Æthelred was forced to take shelter with the family of his second wife, Emma of Normandy.

We don't know what part, if any, the young Edmund played in these military reversals. But we do know that his life was utterly transformed by the death of his eldest brother, Æthelstan in 1014. Æthelred's second son,

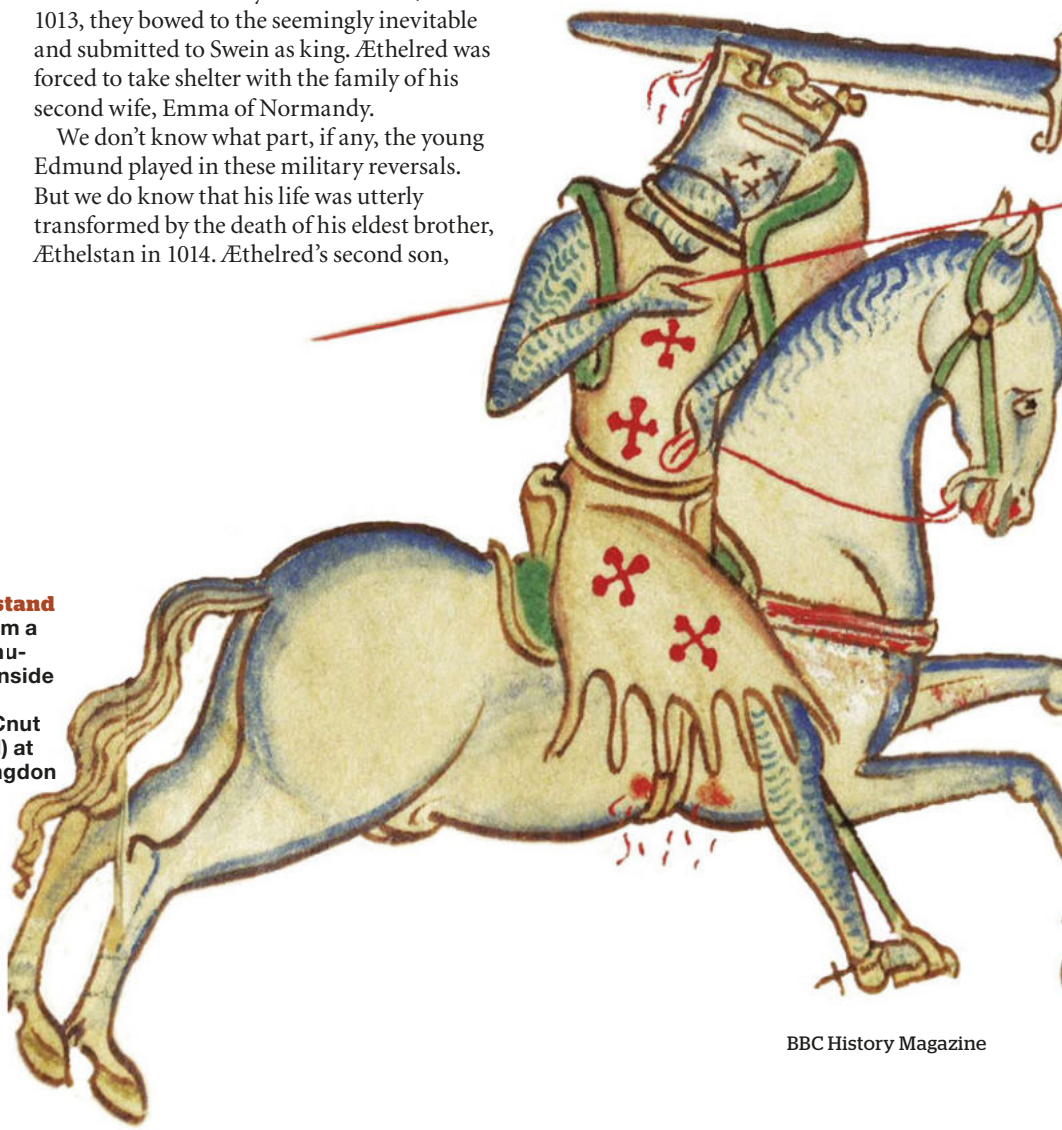
Ecgbert, was already dead (he witnessed no royal documents after 1005, presumably perishing in that year) and so, when Æthelstan succumbed to illness in June 1014, Edmund suddenly found himself the eldest of the king's surviving sons.

But that didn't mean Edmund was universally accepted as Æthelred's successor. *The Life of Edward the Confessor* (written 50 years later) claims that when Æthelred's second wife, Emma, was pregnant with her first child, all Englishmen swore that if it were a boy, they would accept him as king. This had been a serious blow to Edmund and his eldest brother. Their response was to look to Northumbria and the five main Danish towns of the Midlands for support in securing the succession, allying themselves with two prominent thegns, Sigeforth and Morcar.

Following Æthelstan's death, Edmund was left to fight on alone – and soon found himself at loggerheads with his father's chief adviser, Eadric Streona. When, in early 1015, Eadric had Sigeforth and Morcar "basely" killed – having enticed them into his chamber – Edmund defied his father and Eadric by marrying Sigeforth's widow and acquiring all the former thegns' estates in the Midlands.

## Edmund takes a stand

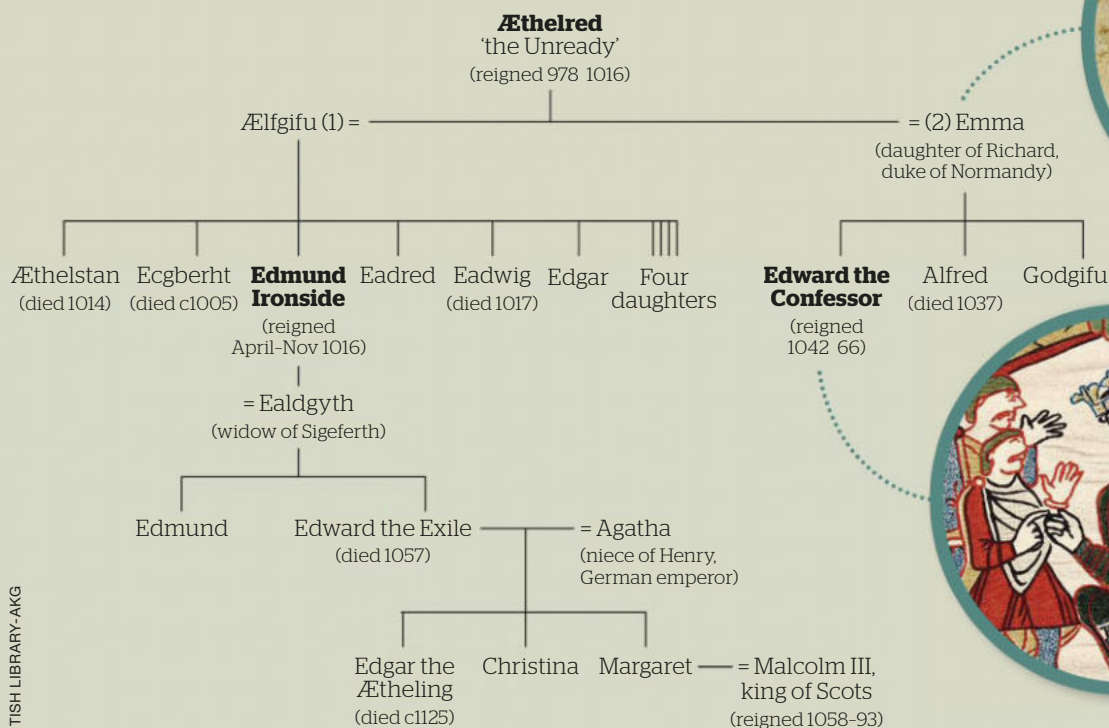
An illustration from a 13th-century manuscript depicts Ironside clashing with his Danish nemesis Cnut (wielding a sword) at the battle of Ashington





## FAMILY TREE The West Saxon royal line

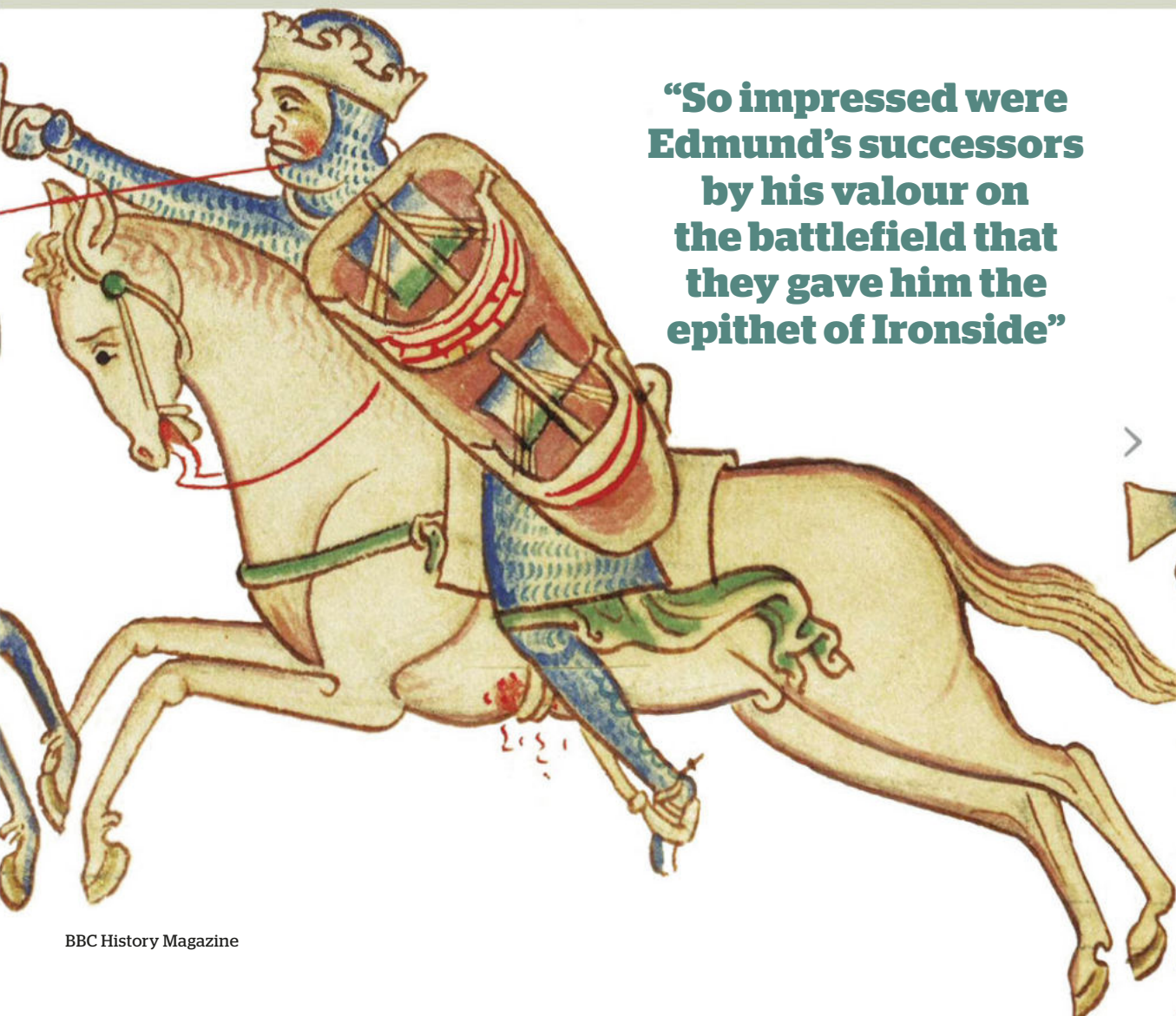
Edmund's sons never ruled England, but grandson Edgar rebelled against William I



ABOVE LEFT: Queen Emma, who married King Cnut after the death of her first husband, Æthelred. LEFT: Edward the Confessor, Ironside's half-brother, shown in the Bayeux Tapestry



**“So impressed were Edmund’s successors by his valour on the battlefield that they gave him the epithet of Ironside”**





## Edmund Ironside

Now, with the people of the north submitting to him, Edmund had clearly set himself up as a rival to Æthelred's regime.

As Edmund and Æthelred continued to fall out, the Danish king Cnut invaded England with a large army. Eadric Streona led the forces of the ailing king while Edmund gathered his own army. The two English forces briefly came together but when Edmund realised that Eadric wanted to betray him, he withdrew. Eadric then decided to switch his allegiances. Taking 40 ships from the king's fleet with him, he joined the Danish side.

From then onwards, the Anglo-Saxon chronicler presented Edmund in a completely different light. Gone was the rebellious younger son unchecked by a weak father. Edmund suddenly became a military leader of great energy and effectiveness. He fought several engagements in 1016 – the first in the north Midlands, supported by Earl Uhtred of Northumbria – although without achieving victory.

When Cnut occupied Yorkshire and had Uhtred executed, Edmund went south to London, where his father died on 23 April. He was soon forced to flee the city as the advancing Danes prepared to besiege it, but not before all the city's inhabitants and such national counsellors as were present had chosen him as king.

Gaimar reports that Edmund married the sister of a Welsh king (presumably his first wife had died) and that the Welsh fought with him. A German chronicler also included the Welsh among those fighting in England in 1016, and an Old Norse poem called *Liðsmannaflokkur* ('Song of the Men of the Host') mentioned Danish blows falling upon Welsh armour.

### Sensing victory

During a series of clashes between English and Danes across southern England and the Midlands, Edmund appeared to seize the advantage. He drove his enemies into Kent and on into Essex, where he joined battle with Cnut at a hill called Ashingdon on 18 October.

With Ealdorman Eadric once more changing sides and backing him again, Edmund may have sensed victory. But his luck was about to run out. Eadric's men fled from the battlefield, all but condemning Edmund's army to defeat. Gaimar reports



**England in late 1016** Ironside and Cnut agreed to divide England in two, with Cnut taking Mercia and the north, as our map shows

## “Edmund and Cnut made peace... they divided the country in two, with Cnut taking control of Mercia”

that the Welsh dragged Edmund from the battlefield before he could be cut down. “All the nobility of England was there destroyed,” the Anglo-Saxon chronicler lamented.

According to another Scandinavian poem, the Danes and English met in one further battle at ‘Danaskógar’ (perhaps the Forest of Dean), after which Edmund and Cnut made peace at Alney in Gloucestershire. They divided the country in two, with Cnut taking control of Mercia and the north (and receiving a significant monetary payment for his army) and Edmund ruling the land south of the Thames, the historic kingdom of Wessex.

This arrangement was to be short-lived for, by the end of November, Edmund was dead. Contemporary English sources shed little light on how he died – though, in the 1070s, the chronicler Adam of Bremen claimed that he had been poisoned. Gaimar's version of events is the most extraordinary. He claimed that someone had fired an arrow up into Edmund while he was sat on the privy, piercing his body as far as his lungs.

Edmund was buried beside his grandfather, King Edgar, at Glastonbury Abbey in what is

now Somerset. Cnut, who became undisputed king of England, later visited and left gifts at his tomb.

Edmund Ironside's brief reign left few records, but his family's role in British history persisted long beyond his death. Edmund's stepmother, Emma, married Cnut and may have influenced his decision to exile Edmund's sons to Hungary, where the younger one died. Edward, the eldest son, was however invited back by the English in 1057 in the hope that he might succeed the childless Edward the Confessor.

Edward the Exile died that same year, before having met the king, but his own son Edgar retained some political significance. As the only candidate for the throne in 1066 directly descended from an English king, Edgar participated in various rebellions against William the Conqueror after the Norman invasion, including the northern uprising of 1069–70. Although Edgar never gained power, his sister, Edmund's granddaughter, Margaret, became queen of Scotland by marrying King Malcolm III.

### Defence of the realm

Had Edmund lived, the course of English history might have been

different. Refreshed and re-armed after the battle of Ashingdon, Edmund could have led an army successfully against the Danes in the north, driven Cnut back to his Scandinavian homeland and reunited England under West Saxon rule.

His son and grandson could have followed him on the throne, displacing Edmund's half-brother Edward from the succession and thus preventing the political crisis of 1066 that led to the Norman Conquest. But 1,000 years after his death, Edmund Ironside's enduring legacy now rests only on the military prowess he demonstrated in his valiant defence of his realm. **H**

**Sarah Foot** is the regius professor of ecclesiastical history at Christ Church, University of Oxford. Her books include *Æthelstan: The First King of England* (Yale English Monarchs Series, Yale, 2011)

### DISCOVER MORE

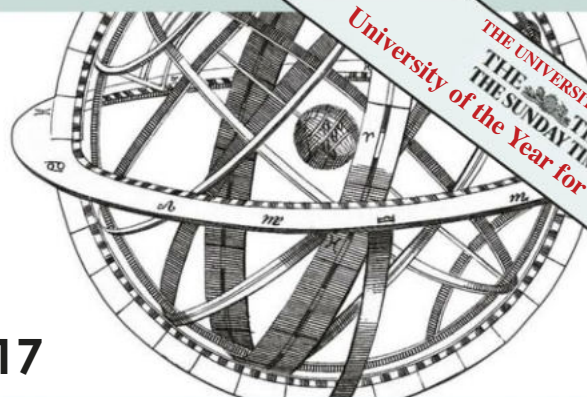
#### BOOK

► **Royal Authority in Anglo-Saxon England** by Gale R Owen-Crocker and Brian W Schneider (eds) (British Archaeological Reports, 2013)



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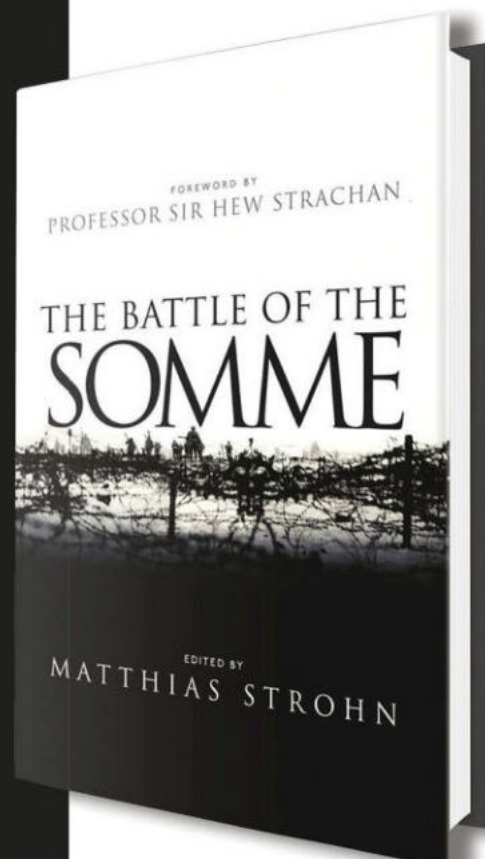
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# BOOKS



Clare Jackson with a 17th-century bust of Charles II in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. "One of the attractive things about Charles is that he didn't take himself overly seriously. He had irony in abundance," she says

Photography by  
Ian Farrell



## INTERVIEW / CLARE JACKSON

*"Charles II had to appeal to public opinion more than his predecessors did"*

Clare Jackson talks to **Matt Elton** about her new biography of Charles II, which explores how his early experiences shaped his reign – and why he was uniquely aware of his own image

IAN FARRELL



## PROFILE CLARE JACKSON

Currently senior tutor of Trinity Hall, University of Cambridge, Jackson studied history at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge and moved to her current college in 2000. She was co-editor of the *Historical Journal* between 2004 and 2011, and presented the documentary series *The Stuarts* and *The Stuarts in Exile* for BBC Two in 2014 and 2015.

### IN CONTEXT

Born in 1630, Charles II's early life was disrupted by the outbreak of civil war in the early 1640s. He fled into exile, while his father, Charles I, was executed in 1649. After a brief return to Scotland in 1650–51, Charles remained in exile until the collapse of Richard Cromwell's 'protectorate' led to him being invited back as king. His reign was marked by political instability but also by the production of distinctive cultural works. Notable events included the plague of 1665, fire of 1666, and the Dutch wars. Charles, who had many mistresses and illegitimate offspring, died in 1685 and was succeeded by his brother, James II and VII.

### You write that Charles's personality was shaped by instability. How far can we trace this to his formative years?

Rather than assuming that Charles II only becomes of interest when he returns as king at the age of 30 in 1660, one of the major things that I wanted to emphasise in this biography is that the first three decades of his life were profoundly influential in how he would rule as king.

His first decade fell during Charles I's 'personal rule': his parents' court preserved royal majesty by creating distance and detachment from his people. But Charles's childhood was cut short when his father's authority started to disintegrate, first in Scotland and then in Ireland and England. So, from the age of nine or ten onwards, he would have been aware of great political instability and was constantly on campaign with his father – if not leading armies, then witnessing key battles in the civil wars.

Charles parted from his father in 1645 and never saw him again. He fled to France, chased by parliamentarian enemies, and spent several years in exile. After his father's execution, he returned to Scotland in 1650, but this ended in military disaster when he invaded England and suffered a huge military defeat at the battle of Worcester in 1651. It was a rout of the royalists, and Charles then spent 43 days on the run.

He was only 21 years old and forced to rely on his subjects' courage. It gave him a unique insight into how ordinary people lived in a way that no other monarch really had. Eventually he managed to get to Shoreham and then over to France, but

those 43 days both haunted and inspired him for the rest of his life, and later became very central to Restoration public memory.

It's also telling that he preserved his life precisely because he had to disguise his majesty. He avoided capture because people thought that he was an ordinary subject, and so the notion thereafter that Charles might sometimes have 'played at' being king is quite fitting, given his civil war experiences.

### Do you think that this role-playing was a way of Charles dealing with the instability of his life and reign?

Yes, and I think that it was very effective. One of the attractive things about writing about Charles II is that he was not someone who always took himself overly seriously. He had irony in abundance – and irony is not something that one often encounters in absolute monarchs.

A courtier later claimed that Charles even tended to talk about himself in the third person, saying things such as "Charles Stuart might do this, but the king would do that", while hinting that, in practice, he tended to follow the former. He had a brilliantly self-aware capacity for duality, which I think shrinks any pretensions that biographers may have that they can somehow capture an individual's single, 'definitive' self.

### Who, aside from Charles, do you see as the key figures in this story?

One of the results of Charles's experiences in exile was that he was unlikely to vest total confidence in any one person. Many of his councillors described him as inscrutable, and if that's how contemporaries saw him, then he's going to be a challenge for biographers!

So although he was very affable and gregarious, it's quite hard to identify people in whom he placed complete trust. There were key figures at different points in his reign who managed political business on

his behalf, and key mistresses and courtiers, but there is a sense that this was very much someone who also kept his own counsel.

### Some historians argue that Charles's personal life distracted him from being king. What's your take on that?

Charles II was unusual in the extent to which he flaunted his conquests, very publicly dignifying most of his illegitimate offspring with aristocratic titles. But I think interest in his personal life, as much among contemporaries as by modern historians, has tended to overshadow analysis of the rest of his reign.

There are, however, political dimensions to his personal life. If one sees Charles primarily as a pragmatist, one may ask why he didn't follow Henry VIII's example and divorce his wife so that he could remarry and have a legitimate heir. Their fertility problem was clearly not his: he had at least 14 illegitimate children and, just as uncertainty over the succession had destabilised Elizabeth I's reign, the fact Charles's brother and heir was openly Catholic destabilised the Restoration.

And yet Charles clearly felt the divine right of his kingship very strongly: he had waited years after his father's execution to gain his throne, after all. From that angle, divorcing Catherine and having another child, or retrospectively legitimising his eldest son, the Protestant Duke of Monmouth, was actually depriving the rightful heir. However potentially problematic his brother's Catholicism was, Charles believed that he had a God-given right to succeed.

### Why was Charles so keenly aware of his public image, and how unusual is this in a monarch?

Charles was unlike most of his predecessors because the civil wars had seen a massive expansion of popular engagement in politics – hence a new PR of kingship was needed. Although we don't think of him as a king who produced lots of written works, more of his proclamations and parliamentary speeches were printed than of any previous monarch.

In other ways too, Charles's use of PR was effective. When we think of him as a tactile monarch, we think in terms of his sex life and mistresses, but he was also 'in touch' with many ordinary subjects. Indeed, through the 'royal touch' – thought to be a cure for scrofula, or 'the king's evil' – Charles physically touched more of his subjects than

*"Those 43 days on the run gave Charles a unique insight into how ordinary people lived"*





Charles II travels to Westminster on 22 April 1661, the eve of his coronation, in this contemporary illustration. "Charles clearly felt the divine right of his kingship very strongly: he had waited years to gain his father's throne, after all," argues Clare Jackson

any monarch before: estimated to have been around 100,000 people during his reign.

So this was someone who understood the powerful message that divine kingship could hold. It's telling that the peaks in 'royal touch' ceremonies coincided with the times of greatest pressure and instability in his reign.

**Charles is also notable for reigning over a period of remarkable culture. How key was he in its development?**

The extraordinarily rich culture of the Restoration is one reason many of us think we know something about Charles – perhaps better than we really do. Much of this is due to Samuel Pepys: a wonderfully accessible, irresistibly interesting diarist, who chronicled in detail the first decade of Charles's reign.

It's also the case that Charles was centrally involved in many aspects of culture, such as theatre and architecture. Unlike any of his royal predecessors, Charles had spent over a decade in exile, visiting various European palaces and courts, and he therefore took a lot of interest in architectural projects, both before and after the 1666 London fire.

**This is, of course, the period of that fire, and of plague and war. How did Charles's response to these events shape how people saw him?**

That point about the PR of kingship is important: this is a king that many children first encounter in tales of the 'Great Fire of London', with images of Charles and his brother physically manning water pumps.

This was also remarked upon at the time and hugely boosted contemporaries' morale.

The flipside of the quick succession of plague in 1665, fire in 1666 and a humiliating naval defeat in 1667 – when the Dutch fleet sailed up the river Medway and captured the Royal Navy's flagship – was that contemporaries could also see this catalogue of catastrophes as a dreadful providential verdict. The fact that the fire happened in 1666, and the number '666' denoted the 'sign of the beast' in the Book of Revelation, generated a brooding sense that all was not well at the heart of Charles's court.

**Are there any lessons from this period that we can apply to the world today?**

I'm always quite sceptical about searching for 'modernity' in early modern history, but there are resonances. The excitement earlier this year about the identification of gravitational waves may well echo the anticipation that surrounded experiments carried out by the new Royal Society in the 1660s. All of the coffee shops springing up in Restoration London would seem very familiar, too!

I also think that recurrent fears about a 'Popish plot' in this period very much echo current anxieties about the capacity for religious radicalism to translate into political extremism.

**What misconceptions about Charles would you like this book to correct?**

I'd like to reconnect the first three decades of Charles's life with his reign. To under-

*"The legacy of instability inherited by Charles would have challenged any monarch"*

stand him, you can't begin in 1660: you also need to explore his years growing up and the years that he spent in exile.

I'd also like to stress the sheer radicalism of what happened during the 1640s and 1650s and its importance in shaping the volatile nature of Charles's inheritance as king. As Joseph Glanville, the rector of Bath Abbey, said, a "people that rebelled once, and successfully, will be ready to do so often", just "as water that has been boiled, will boil again the sooner". That legacy of instability and unpredictability would have been challenging for any monarch, and may explain why popular attention is often deflected to focus on Restoration theatre or to Charles's mistresses. I think that it's very important that we don't lose sight of the air of pervasive instability and trauma that he inherited. **H**



**Charles II: The Star King**  
by Clare Jackson (Allen Lane,  
144 pages, £12.99)



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Soldiers during the battles of Imphal and Kohima against Japanese forces, 1944. Srinath Raghavan's book is a "beautifully written analysis" of India's war story, says Robert Lyman

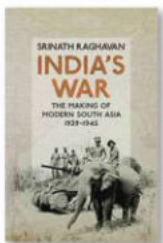
## Fighting misconceptions

**ROBERT LYMAN** has high praise for an ambitious history of India's role in the Second World War

### India's War: The Making of Modern South Asia, 1939-1945

Srinath Raghavan

Allen Lane, 576 pages, £30



When the young officer cadet Srinath Raghavan was allocated to the Meiktila Company at the Indian Military Academy at Dehradun, he had no idea of the provenance of his

company's unusual title. He realised that there was something wrong about his lack of knowledge: why did this and other names, designed as battle honours – in this case, a 1945 Allied victory against Japanese forces – not resonate with him and other young men joining up as potential junior leaders in India's modern army? It would have been inconceivable for an Australian officer cadet to fail to recognise the name of Gallipoli, for instance, or a young Briton arriving at Sandhurst to know nothing of Normandy or El Alamein.

It was this realisation that set the young Raghavan off on the journey that was to end with this excellent book. The problem, he recognised, was a pervasive popular culture in India that considers its history to have begun in 1947, and that anything that happened before was irrevocably tainted by association with the Raj.

Raghavan's achievement is, quite simply, superb, and I have waited a long time to read a book as good as this. His intention was to understand the military history of India during the Second World War in its widest context: strategic, political and economic. Few have done this successfully before, and Raghavan's work is therefore particularly notable for doing so in a finely balanced and objective way.

It is clear on every page of this beautifully written analysis that the history of wartime India was not black and white, but instead reflected a vast and colourful kaleidoscope of views, opinions and attitudes that were themselves the product of a complex country of 300 million people sharing little more than a common history of imperialism. For example – bearing out the results of my own research – Raghavan shows that most Indian soldiers were able to appreciate the need to defeat Japanese fascism by fighting in the Indian army of the Raj, while also maintaining their desire for, and determination to achieve, some form of independence once the war was over.

Likewise, most otherwise loyal Indian soldiers saw the Indian National Army (INA), which formed an alliance with imperial Japan, as an aberration caused as much by British failure to protect India's interests as by the perfidy of individual soldiers who swapped sides in 1942. This explains the distinct lack of enthusiasm for prosecuting captured INA soldiers at the end of the

***"The book's vast sweep encompasses the story of the Indian army at war"***





COMING SOON...

"Hitler continues to fascinate historians and, next issue, we'll be considering a major new account of his life. Studies of subjects including China and Culloden will also be up for analysis, and I'll be talking to Kate Summerscale - author of *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher* - about her new book." *Matt Elton, reviews editor*

war. It is the calm, careful balance of judgments such as these that makes this book so satisfying and, quite frankly, a long-awaited antidote to some of the one-sided tomes that have preceded it.

Raghavan also pleasingly intersperses his account with juicy vignettes, such as material about the Nazis' Indian Legion, as well as tasty morsels derived from the letters and diaries of Indian participants.

The book's vast sweep effortlessly and accurately encompasses the story of the Indian army at war across the near and Middle East, north Africa, Italy and the far east: Malaya, Singapore and, of course, most famously, Burma. The 1944 clashes at Imphal and Kohima, and the 1945 battle of Meiktila, south of

**"Srinath Raghavan's achievement is, quite simply, superb. I have waited a long time for a book as good as this"**

Mandalay, represented two dramatic defeats by the Indian army of the Japanese during the Second World War. In other countries these victories would be recorded annually with processions and parades. Even Britain, in a 2012 debate organised by the National Army Museum, acknowledged Imphal and Kohima to have been India's "greatest battle". Not so in India.

Yet Raghavan's success is to demonstrate convincingly the importance to modern India (and Pakistan) of their coming of age in 1947 through the trials, tribulations, achievements and victories of their armed forces in the years from 1939–45. It can only be hoped that his book will allow young Indians to take a new and positive view of their modern history, one that does not dismiss the final years of imperialism as irrelevant, but sees them instead as the essential birth pangs of the modern nation. **H**

Robert Lyman is the author of *Among the Headhunters: An Extraordinary World War II Story of Survival in the Burmese Jungle*, set to be published by Da Capo in June

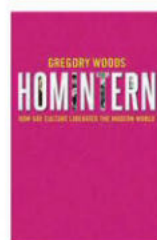
## Pride and prejudice

**JOANNA BOURKE** *commends a look at the social contributions of gay cultural figures – and the opposition that they faced*

### Homintern: How Gay Culture Liberated the Modern World

by Gregory Woods

Yale, 440 pages, £25



The term 'homintern' is a lighthearted gesture towards the international communist movement the Comintern, and a play on words used by the likes of Cyril Connolly, WH Auden and their

friends to refer to a network of homosexual writers, artists and other cultural figures. Hostile commentators, however, took it to mean something much more sinister: an international homosexual conspiracy that was having an excessive impact on society. Even Friedrich Engels fretted about the influence of homosexuals, complaining in an 1869 letter to Sigmund Freud that "the paederasts [sic] are beginning to count themselves and find that they make up a power in the state". By the Cold War, such rhetoric reached near-hysterical levels: it was feared that gay men and lesbians might even destroy civilisation itself.

Gregory Woods here offers a history of the roles that homosexual writers, artists, musicians, dancers and academics have played in society. In many ways, Woods is the subject of his own book: he is a poet, literary critic and, in 1998, became the UK's first professor of gay and lesbian studies. When his appointment became public, the then shadow home secretary, Ann Widdecombe, denounced it as a "phenomenal waste of public money". Others declared it evidence of national degeneration. Plus ça change.

Woods' history of the 'homintern' is in turn hilarious and horrifying. He treats readers to an account of the first time the word 'orgasm' was used in an English court, during the infamous Salomé trial of 1918 (both the judge and prosecuting counsel had no idea what it meant, asking whether it was "some unnatural vice"). Woods also documents shocking levels of persecution. Homophobia was pervasive, and vicious. Gay individuals were routinely pathologised, banished into exile, imprisoned and driven to suicide.

But this is not a gloomy book. Woods lovingly presents a range of gloriously outrageous gay and lesbian individuals and couples. Although many found it necessary to cultivate 'discretion' (which Woods says is a "broader concept than the 'closet', but it occupies the same wardrobe space"), they also lauded creative expression. Literature and dance would not be the same without their energies.

It is not a simplistic story. Not all homosexual people felt comfortable with 'gay liberation', for example. Still others believed that the movement was for the young. As 60-year-old John Cheever confessed in his diary in 1972, "I am tired of... brooding on what a gay bar must be like. Are they filled with scented hobgoblins, girlish youths, stern beauties? I will never know." Such melancholic sentiments aside, the liberation movement blossomed, as gay and lesbian people began (in Engels' words)

"to count themselves and find that they make up a power in the state". **H**

**Joanna Bourke** is the author of *The Story of Pain* (OUP, 2014)



**The poet WH Auden stars in a new look at gay cultural figures' impact on society**

BRIDGEMAN





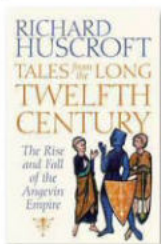
A 13th-century depiction of the crowning of Henry the Young King. The “handsome, dashing and brave” Henry and his world are “brought vividly to life” in Richard Huscroft’s book

## Family empire

**MARC MORRIS** enjoys an innovative study of the Angevin empire, the medieval collection of states ruled over by Henry II and his sons

### Tales from the Long Twelfth Century

by Richard Huscroft  
Yale, 336 pages, £20



How does one tell the story of the Angevin empire, that vast but ramshackle assemblage of provinces cobbled together by Henry II? Henry, and afterwards his sons, Richard and John, ruled not only

England but all of western France, and claimed to be overlords of Wales, Ireland and Scotland. Their dominion stretched a thousand miles from north to south and half that distance from east to west.

The traditional answer is to tell this story through those of its rulers, but this

approach can have its limitations. Just as the kings themselves found it impossible to be everywhere at once, so historians who follow in their footsteps find it taxing to cover all the ground. How can readers be expected to care about the affairs of Gascony when they are preoccupied with the titanic struggle between Henry II and Thomas Becket, for instance?

Richard Huscroft’s solution is to widen his cast of characters considerably, and to focus not on the Angevin kings but on a host of supporting players. His book is a collection of 10 interlocking tales (with deliberately Chaucerian

**“Huscroft’s approach, when it works, works very well indeed”**

titles such as ‘The Friend’s Tale’), relating the stories of lesser-known individuals such as Richard de Clare, one of the pioneering Anglo-Norman conquerors of Ireland, and Nicola de la Haye, the remarkable female sheriff called upon to defend Lincoln Castle from rebel siege in 1216. The stories advance chronologically through the 12th century, from the origins of the empire in the dynastic schemes of Henry I to its disastrous collapse during the reign of King John.

It’s an innovative approach that, when it works, works very well indeed. One of the standout chapters is about Henry the Young King, eldest surviving son of Henry II, so-called because, uniquely in English history, he was crowned in his father’s lifetime but then died before his father in 1183, and thus never got to rule in his own right. The young Henry, who was for a time the darling of the international tournament circuit, is deftly drawn, “handsome, dashing and brave”, and his world brought vividly to life.

Part of the reason that the Young King’s story grips, however, is that there is enough material to sustain it, and that is not true of all the stories on offer. The book begins, for example, with the tale of William Ætheling, son of Henry I, another heir apparent who predeceased his father, in this case by drowning in 1120. Huscroft relates this well-known episode with gusto, but then has nowhere to go, because dying a tragic death is the only interesting thing William ever did.

Elsewhere Huscroft is able to spin out limited material to much greater effect. Some of his most memorable scenes are of Henry II’s daughter, Joan, married for a time to the king of Sicily, whom we are invited to picture dressed in Muslim fashions like the other ladies of her husband’s court. Her tale is so engrossing that it’s aggravating when her brother Richard sails into town and supplants her in the narrative. The kings still have a tendency to thrust themselves into the foreground, and more compression of these sections would have given a good, original book more kick. **H**

Marc Morris is the author of *King John: Treachery, Tyranny and the Road to Magna Carta* (Hutchinson, 2015)



Plato and Aristotle discuss philosophy in 'The School of Athens', an early 16th-century fresco by Raphael. "Ancient arguments over religious belief seem eerily familiar," says our reviewer Miles Russell

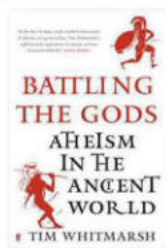
## Original sinners?

**MILES RUSSELL** on a study of religious disbelief in the ancient world that shows that atheism is far older than we may think

### Battling the Gods: Atheism in the Ancient World

by Tim Whitmarsh

Faber, 304 pages, £25



Before reading this book, I had assumed atheism was a product of the European enlightenment, when 17th and 18th-century philosophers began to question the absolute nature of religion and

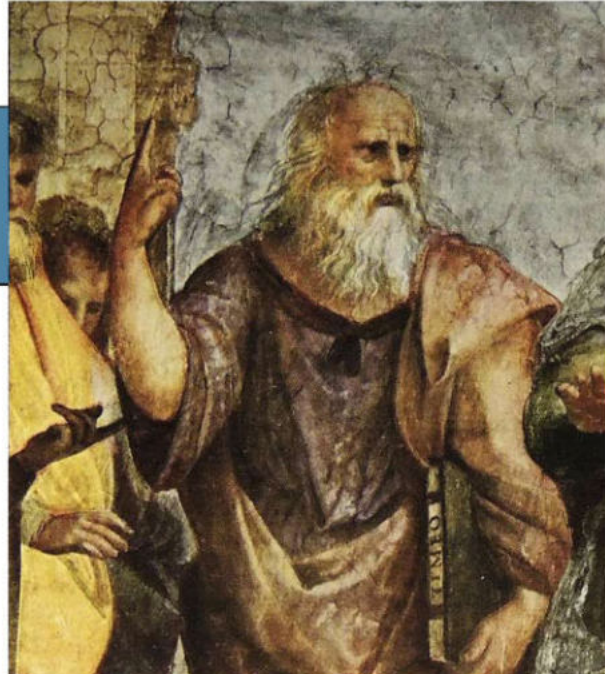
religious thinking. Tim Whitmarsh shows that, before the imposition of state-sanctioned Roman imperial monotheism, many in the ancient world openly expressed doubt about the gods and their role in the natural order of things.

Whitmarsh is at pains to point out that he is not part of a larger movement determined to prove a 'truth' or expose an ancient falsehood; his book is "a work of history, not of proselytism". In guiding us through the lives of those who set out to question the divine, from the first stirrings of the Greek city state to the

establishment of Christian orthodoxy in the Roman empire of the fourth century AD, Whitmarsh is a thought-provoking and thoroughly engaging guide.

We encounter free-thinking characters such as Plato, Thucydides, Diagoras (arguably the first self-professed atheist) and Democritus, who pondered if reality comprised nothing more than particles spinning randomly in the void. Perhaps most prescient is Lucretius who, in the political turmoil at the end of the Roman republic, used the example of Agamemnon – who was advised to sacrifice his daughter to allay the wrath of the goddess Artemis – to act as a warning of the "terrible evil that religion was able to induce". The specifics of belief and the names of the gods may change over time but the dangerous consequences

**"Democritus pondered if reality was nothing but particles spinning randomly in the void"**



of an absolute and unshakable religious conviction, it would appear, do not.

We sometimes forget that the loose-knit cities of the ancient Greek world had no central authority that bound them together, with no single religious doctrine and no sacred set of laws to which all citizens adhered. Although possessing a shared mythology, Greek gods had a distinctly regionalised feel, and there was constant debate within the intellectual elite as to the importance of deities, the precise nature of the world and ultimate place of humanity. Crucially, this debate was fuelled not by religious fervour but by secular philosophy. When the Greek world was conquered and forcibly absorbed into the Roman empire, the gods themselves remained, albeit tactfully rebranded to better fit the new order. The intensity of philosophical debate may

## Behind bars

**HELEN COWIE** explores an account of how the English came to love wild animals, which features a diverse supporting cast

### Menagerie: The History of Exotic Animals in England

by Caroline Grigson

Oxford University Press, 368 pages, £20



In spring 1826, London was "elephant-struck". The reason: the famous elephant Chuneé had gone 'mad', and was threatening to break out of his den. A long-term resident of Edward

Cross's menagerie in the Strand, Chuneé was a noted figure in the city and a staple of the tourist circuit. Now considered a dangerous beast, he was sentenced to death by his owner, perishing in a hail of bullets in the cage where he had spent the last 12 years of his life. It was a sorry end for a much-loved animal, and a scene that would imprint itself on the memory of Londoners for years to come.

Chuneé's tragic demise is just one of many fascinating encounters with exotic animals related in Caroline Grigson's

book. Humans have long been enchanted by unfamiliar beasts, some of which have graced menageries, museums and zoological gardens. *Menagerie* traces the collection and exhibition of exotic animals in England from the Norman conquest to the accession of Queen Victoria and reveals their continuous presence in British life. In the process, we are introduced to a colourful cast of characters, from the boxing kangaroo in Gilbert Pidcock's menagerie to the Duke of Devonshire's expectorating llama. We also learn about the keepers who cared for these animals, the dealers who sold them and the scientists who dissected them.

Grigson provides a supremely detailed account of England's exotic animals. Her zoological expertise enables her to

TOP PHOTO





have lessened within the famously deity-tolerant, multifaith society of Rome, but the questioning of belief systems remained, at least until later emperors ensured that non-adherence to orthodox Christianity was no longer an option.

Whitmarsh offers a lucid examination of early western intellectual debate. It is interesting that, 2,000 years on, ancient arguments over religious belief seem eerily familiar. This is a timely reminder that atheism is a tradition comparable in antiquity to the earliest religions and, as such, is an effective argument against the view that the worship of gods is hard-wired into the human mind. It would appear that debate and disbelief are, like the gods themselves, as old as the hills. **H**

**Miles Russell** is senior lecturer in archaeology at Bournemouth University

identify more obscure species exhibited by showmen, while her archival work allows her to untangle their complex journeys to and within the British Isles.

The book would, in places, benefit from deeper discussion of the wider cultural significance of exotic animals. The conclusion touches on some of these issues, notably the relationship between animals and empire and the question of animal cruelty, but these might have been dealt with at greater length. Nonetheless, this remains a valuable contribution to the history of animals and makes for an entertaining and informative read. **H**

**Helen Cowie** is the author of *Exhibiting Animals in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

BRIDGEMAN

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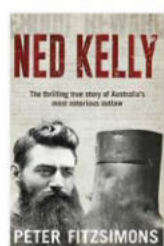
## A divisive figure

**GRAHAM SEAL** is swept along by a big, bold biography of the 19th-century outlaw Ned Kelly, which may attract critics

### Ned Kelly

by Peter FitzSimons

Bantam Press, 848 pages, £30



Gallipoli and several iconic Australian heroes. His latest title is a biography of the contradictory bushranger, Ned Kelly.

Even today, the Kelly saga is controversial, the focus of an extensive industry endlessly recycling the tragic tale. In his introduction, the author explains his need to do it all again: because it is “a huge and quintessentially Australian story”.

The tale of a bushman's defiance of authority involves a deep-seated perception of injustice within the small farmer community of north-eastern Victoria. It is an epic of inept and oppressive policing, conflicts of class and ethnicity as well as the problem that lies at the base of every historical Robin Hood tradition: access to the land and its resources. The traumatic violence that erupted from this local situation turned Ned Kelly into a local hero, then a folk hero and ultimately a national hero – at least to some. To others he was, and remains, just a murdering thug. The ways in which this difference of opinion, and the drama of the historical period in which Kelly lived, tie in to notions of Australian national identity makes the subject irresistible to a popular historian who wears his national identity on his sleeve (he is currently chair of the Australian Republican Movement).

Peter FitzSimons writes Australian popular history – a lot of it. He concentrates on topics of mythic interest to mainstream Australian notions of national identity, and has written blockbusters on

FitzSimons invokes no less a historian than Leopold von Ranke in supporting his approach in telling “how it essentially was”. In the end, not surprisingly, he comes down on Ned's side, as many historians have, although some recent research partly rehabilitates the police.

FitzSimons has a formula for his hugely successful books. He interviews relevant experts (here, a number of eminent Kelly scholars) then whips the results into a highly readable narrative – “recreating the whole story”, as he puts it. He employs invented dialogue and recreated primary-source quotations, as well as imputed emotions and motivations. Not surprisingly, this makes him unpopular with some academic historians who feel he is inventing, rather than interpreting, the past. His work is regularly attacked on these grounds by historians who argue that he is fostering rather than dissecting the mythologies in which his subjects are drenched. Whether it's history as defined by professional historians depends on your point of view on such grand matters as what ‘history’ is and who owns it.

On the other hand, FitzSimons is not an academic; he is a writer of popular non-fiction with an eye for detail and

character and a sharp sense of what appeals to readers.

Here he brings Kelly's never-ending story up to date. He does not tell us anything new about the man and the potency of his legend, but he delivers a comprehensive package with characteristic verve and drive. **H**

**Graham Seal** is professor of folklore at Curtin University, Western Australia



A 20th-century lithograph of Ned Kelly. His saga is “a quintessentially Australian story”, a new book argues



# How to Become a Successful Writer!

by Marian Ashcroft

If you've ever fancied being a writer but don't know where to start – here's the answer. For the past twenty-seven years The Writers Bureau has been running a home-study Creative Writing course that teaches ordinary people how to write, get published and earn an extra income.

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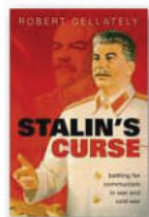
## PAPERBACKS



### Stalin's Curse: Battling for Communism in War and Cold War

by Robert Gellately

Oxford, 496 pages, £12.99



This is a survey of Soviet history and foreign policy under Stalin, between the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop

Pact between the USSR and Nazi Germany in August 1939 and his death in 1953. The long-term 'curse' (also referred to as an 'abyss') is the political-economic system imposed on the USSR and other countries.

Robert Gellately is a distinguished historian, most of whose previous work has related to the Nazis and Germany. His latest book is an impressive piece of scholarship, using published material made available in Russia since the late 1980s, as well as recent western interpretations. This paperback edition is to be welcomed.

The author maintains that he follows neither the traditional nor the revisionist schools in his interpretation of the Cold War. He is certainly not a revisionist: he does not accept Soviet security concerns as legitimate, and nor does he assign any blame to the US. But it is hard to see him, on the basis of his two fundamental arguments, as anything other than a well-informed traditionalist. The first argument is that Stalin took Leninism very seriously, and that this, rather than power politics or personal psychosis, is what explains his actions. The second is that Soviet initiatives or responses led to the Cold War. The stress on ideology is correct, but not altogether consistent or subtle

– at one point Gellately dubs Stalin as a “new kind of emperor”. Nor is it new: it dates back to the early Cold War.

The developments of 1939–53 need to be seen in the broader context of large-scale 20th-century international conflict. Events, especially from the late 1930s, led to the fatal weakening of states that had been ‘great powers’ on either side of the Second World War. Conflict and authoritarian governments discredited the political forces of the right in Europe and the far east. This, with widespread popular suffering, generated mass movements on the left. Such developments were certainly not all the making of the man whom the author describes as “the Kremlin boss”.

Evan Mawdsley is honorary professional research fellow at the University of Glasgow

### The Victorians

by David Gange

OneWorld, 208 pages, £9.99



Featuring nuggets on steam-punk, *Doctor Who* and deadly expeditions to view the eclipse,

*The Victorians* covers a huge amount of ground in its 200 pages. But is never anything less than an engaging, clear and thoroughly appetising scholarly introduction to the “multiple identities in fragile balance” that characterised the Victorian era. It would be a challenge to produce anything more helpful in terms of giving students a map through which to meaningfully launch their own explorations into the era.

Steering a course around the caricature of ‘the Victorian’, Gange teases readers with just a hint of threat buzzing in the crowds of Victoria’s coronation procession before excavating brooding urban crisis and suburbanisation. He then grapples with nationhood and empire, class, religion and gender before robustly tackling the period’s economic decline.

The chapters on religion and empire are masterful, conveying a clear narrative analysis with a sense of chronology and debate. There is a useful further reading section and handy index and the text is peppered with generous glossary boxes explaining jingoism, the East India Company and gothic revivalism – to name but a few.

A central chapter explores how the Victorians saw their own past, present and future. This ties in with Gange’s core message that we need to be aware of the shifting lens through which the Victorians have been interpreted by others, thereby acting as “reflections,

refractions, rationales and revoca-

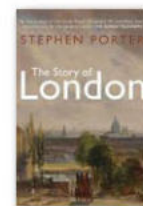
tions of modern society”. This is an excellent beginners’ guide for students and general readers alike.

Alison C Kay is an associate member of the history faculty at the University of Oxford

### The Story of London

by Stephen Porter

Amberley, 96 pages, £9.99



Stephen Porter has given us many accounts of London’s past before, but this is his most ambitious yet: a narrative of the

city’s history from the earliest times to the present. It is copiously illustrated, often with plates provided by the author himself – including one of the Tabard Inn in Southwark, mentioned in Geoffrey Chaucer’s 14th-century *The Canterbury Tales*, which your reviewer had never seen before.

As early as the time of Bede in the eighth century, London had emerged as a major commercial centre, with politics coming later. This scope means that, despite the book’s brevity, there are many unfamiliar gems. For example, the Roman name ‘Londinium’ owes less to Latin than to an earlier language referring to ‘a place at the navigable river’. And the Great Fire of 1666, familiar to all from the work of Pepys, may have destroyed a smaller proportion of the City than a conflagration in about AD 125.

This is a short book on a big subject, well presented.

Stephen Halliday is a senior member of Pembroke College, University of Cambridge



A woman poses in the latest Victorian fashions, c1890





The *Titanic* succumbs to the waves in a 20th-century lithograph. David Dyer's "moving, compassionate novel" finds new things to say about the disaster

## FICTION

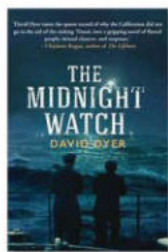
# Sea change

**NICK RENNISON** on a novel that manages to find a fresh take on the much-covered subject of the *Titanic*'s final days

### The Midnight Watch

by David Dyer

Atlantic, 336 pages, £12.99



The tale of the *Titanic* and its encounter with an iceberg in April 1912 has been told so many times, both in fiction and non-fiction, that it is difficult to find a new angle from

which to approach it. By focusing not on the passenger liner itself but on events aboard the SS *Californian*, a British steamship whose captain and crew were later accused of ignoring the *Titanic*'s distress signals, David Dyer has come up with an original take on the tragedy.

John Steadman, a character Dyer has invented, is an American journalist with a taste for liquor and a nose for scandal. He is assigned by his newspaper to cover the story of the *Californian*'s arrival in Boston in the aftermath of its involvement in the search for the bodies of those drowned in the *Titanic* disaster. As he listens to Stanley Lord, the sternly

charismatic captain of the *Californian*, speaking unwillingly to reporters, Steadman scents a scoop.

As he continues to investigate, he begins to hear unpleasant, inexplicable rumours. The *Californian* was much closer to the *Titanic* at the time of its sinking than Lord is prepared to admit. Some of its crew claim to have seen distress rockets fired from the doomed vessel but nothing was done in response. Does the answer to the mystery lie in the puzzling relationship between Lord and his sensitive, unassertive second officer Herbert Stone, the man in charge of the bridge during the vital hours? What did Stone tell Lord, and when?

As Steadman probes for the truth, Dyer cleverly combines his fictional and real-life characters in a narrative that refuses to apportion blame too readily, instead acknowledging the complexity of human motivations and recognising the unanticipated results of human actions. This is a moving novel that opens up a new perspective on the familiar story of the *Titanic*. **H**

**Nick Rennison** is the author of *Carver's Quest* (Corvus, 2013)

## THREE MORE NOVELS ABOUT DISASTER AT SEA

### Every Man for Himself

Beryl Bainbridge (1996)



Bainbridge's characteristically idiosyncratic novel about the *Titanic*'s maiden voyage is narrated by an (invented) nephew of the American financier

JP Morgan, cocooned in the privilege of the ship's first-class quarters as it steams towards catastrophe. Unknown to themselves, the narrator and his fellow wealthy passengers are dancing on the edge of the abyss – and reality, in the shape of the iceberg, is about to intrude into their cosseted lives.

### Crabwalk

Gunter Grass (2002)

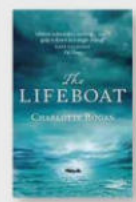


The last major work of fiction by the Nobel Prize-winning German author, this complicated and deviously told story has at its heart the sinking in 1945 of the German

ship the *Wilhelm Gustloff*, then packed to the gunwales with troops and civilians fleeing the Red Army. More than 9,000 lives were lost. Grass's narrative focuses on a journalist in the 1990s, whose mother survived the disaster and wishes him to write about it.

### The Lifeboat

Charlotte Rogan (2012)



The year is 1914, just after the outbreak of the First World War, and the ocean liner the *Empress Alexandra* has foundered in the north Atlantic.

The lifeboats are launched and Rogan's gripping novel follows, day by day, events on one of them, seen through the eyes of her unreliable narrator Grace Winter, as she and her fellow passengers struggle to survive. This is a powerful tale of life and death in extreme circumstances.



# TV & RADIO



## Mid-Atlantic gardening

### Costing the Earth

**RADIO** Radio 4,  
scheduled for Tuesday 19 April

In 1836, HMS *Beagle* visited volcanic Ascension Island, midway between South America and Africa. One of the passengers, Charles Darwin, found it a barren spot, yet today a lush cloud forest covers the peak of 859-metre-high Green Mountain. BBC weather presenter Peter Gibbs travels to the island to see how Darwin, botanist and explorer Joseph Hooker, Kew Gardens and the Royal Navy worked together to create a completely artificial but fully functioning ecosystem on Ascension, including Norfolk pines, first planted as replacement masts for sailing ships.



British soldiers shelter behind barrels during the Easter Rising in 1916

## Understanding Ireland

### 1916: A Letter from Ireland

**RADIO** Radio 4,  
scheduled for Easter Sunday, 27 March

The year of the Easter Rising helped to define modern Ireland. But how did the events of that momentous year seem to those living through them? In a bid to learn more, the 1916 Letters Project has gathered 3,000 letters, essays and other transcripts from private collections. This five-part series uses these documents to build up a picture of life in Ireland a century ago – a picture that looks beyond the perspective of nationalists agitating for change. Check listings for more BBC programmes about the rising.

## The key of life

*Lucy Worsley looks back at a musical prodigy's adventures in Georgian England*

### Mozart in London

**TV** BBC Four, scheduled for late March

The idea that the Austrian-born Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who spent his adult life in such cities as Salzburg and Vienna, thought of himself as a “dyed-in-the-wool Englishman” seems fanciful. Yet, as a new documentary from Lucy Worsley reveals, Mozart’s career was profoundly shaped by a childhood visit to England.

“His time in Georgian London taught him a lot about the elusive nature of commercial success, and about resilience, composing and silver linings,” Worsley tells *BBC History Magazine*. Mozart and his family arrived in London in 1764 on a tour of Europe organised by his musician father, Leopold. Partly bankrolled by an emerging merchant class, the musical scene in London was “exciting, vibrant” and “the place to go as a musician”.

“There was lots of music-making going on for Mozart to listen to and join in,” Worsley adds. “It was a musical melting pot unique in Europe, and the young Mozart met performers he’d work with as an adult.” Then, worryingly, his father fell sick, leading to fears that Leopold might die, leaving his wife, daughter and son stranded in a foreign country.

Yet this proved to be a key moment in the young Mozart’s musical development. His father needed quiet to recover, so the eight-year-old boy was banned from performing or practising. Instead, he wrote down music, composing his Symphony No 1 in E flat major. “It contains the seeds of so much of his later career,” says Worsley. “It’s simple, and in some ways naive, but it contains the most beautiful, daring, clashing harmonies that would prefigure much to come.”

However, a concert of the symphony proved financially unsuccessful. “The disappointed Mozarts had to resort to playing in a downmarket tavern in order to earn the money to leave London.”

It’s a reminder that we shouldn’t get too distracted by the giggling genius of *Amadeus*. Rather, we need to remember that “he was also a member of a family and a profession” – living, moreover, at a time when the expectations of boys and girls were very different.

“What’s missing from our picture of Mozart, I think, is his sister [Marianne, 1751–1829],” says Worsley. “She was just as talented a performer, but it was her destiny to get married. Expectations were so different for girls. I feel annoyed on her behalf!” **II**



**“Mozart’s time in London taught him a lot about success, resilience and composing”**

Lucy Worsley traces a musical genius’s visit to the British capital





Students enjoy a tea party at women-only Royal Holloway College in 1895

## Exams past and present

### Scenes from Student Life

**RADIO** Radio 4, scheduled for Monday 18 April

The subjects studied may have changed down the years, but it seems there are recurring themes in the student experience – and not just booze and bad behaviour. That's the message of a new weekday series fronted by recent history MA student Ellie Cawthorne – who also happens to be *BBC History Magazine's* new web assistant.

The series sees Cawthorne travelling around the UK, comparing the experiences of students current and past. We're shown the annual Oxford Town v Gown

boxing match through the prism of a tavern dispute, the St Scholastica Day riot of 1355. And looking at the pressures of being a student, the series finds parallels between the writings of Abraham de la Pryme, a 17th-century diarist whose friend was driven to suicide by his workload, and the complaints of a 21st-century blogger.

In other episodes, Cawthorne also celebrates Royal Holloway, the first women-only college; charts the experiences of Manchester history students during the First World War; and learns that students have long struggled to fund their lifestyles – even Lord Byron, as an 1806 college wine bill proves.

### Chilly negotiations

#### Bridge of Spies

**DVD** (20th Century Fox, £9.99)

On 1 May 1960, a surface-to-air missile downed a U-2 spy plane over the Soviet Union. The pilot, Gary Powers, parachuted to safety and was tried for espionage. The Cold War got a little frostier. By 1962, though, Powers was set to be freed as part of a prisoner swap that would see KGB agent Rudolf Abel, held by the US, returned to the Soviets.

Key to this exchange was James B Donovan, Abel's lawyer, who went to a divided Berlin and secretly spoke for the US

in deniable talks in which both sides were hugely suspicious of each other.

It was a task that demanded huge moral courage. Accordingly, in Steven Spielberg's masterful thriller based on the incident, Tom Hanks plays Donovan with a kind of everyman determination that recalls Jimmy Stewart in *Mr Smith Goes to Washington*. Balancing this is Mark Rylance, who won an Academy Award for his performance as Abel, a softly spoken and enigmatic figure.

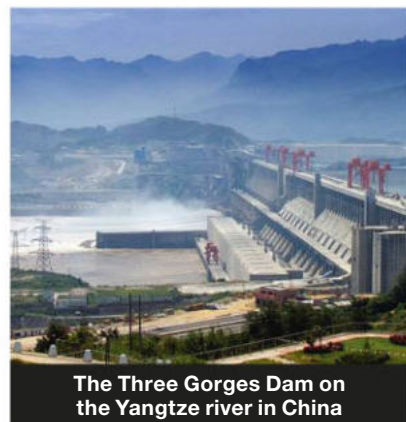


The duo anchor a picture that's old-fashioned in all the best ways – by which we mean beautifully crafted, evocative in its conjuring up of the 1960s and agonisingly tense.

Tom Hanks plays the lawyer James B Donovan in the "masterful" *Bridge of Spies*

## WANT MORE?

We'll send you news of the best history shows every Friday. Sign up now at [historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/newsletter](http://historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/newsletter)



The Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze river in China

How have working-class people shaped, and been portrayed by, British culture over the past 70 years? It's a question tackled by Stuart Maconie in **Archive on 4: Working Class Heroes and Poverty Porn** (Radio 4, Saturday 16 April), which takes postwar British cinema as its starting point and ends with the world of reality TV. The documentary features archive recordings and an interview with writer Peter Flannery (*Our Friends in the North*).

**In Our Time** (Thursday 24 March) continues with a look at *Aurora Leigh* (1856), Elizabeth Barrett Browning's epic poem, which was much admired by, among others, John Ruskin.

For **In the Footsteps of Judas** (BBC One, Good Friday) vicar Kate Bottley considers the life of the Bible's most notorious villain.

Highlights on Yesterday include **Impossible Engineering** (Tuesday 5 April), which considers how modern technological marvels rest on innovations in the past. The Three Gorges Dam, the world's largest hydroelectric power station, for example, could never have been built without the work of Nikola Tesla. Among the channel's re-runs, **The Real King's Speech** (Monday 4 April) tells the story of King George VI's battle to overcome his stammer.

For those with satellite, **Forged in Fire** (History, Thursday 24 March) is a hands-on exercise that culminates in two expert metalworkers trying to craft a Japanese Katana, as used by samurai warriors. "Bake-Off with blades," claims the press release. Also on History, a second season of *Treasure Island* prequel **Black Sails** arrives (Tuesday 22 March).





Latest figures just released show 350 Sumatran tigers remain - down from 500. The figures, from the Sumatran Ministry of Forestry, show how the ruthless assault from poachers is pushing this magnificent creature right to the edge of extinction.

FFI is urgently seeking funds to step up their crucial conservation programme in Kerinci Seblat National Park, Sumatra, Indonesia. In order to safeguard the future existence of these magnificent creatures, it is vital that more rangers are employed

Poaching activity has reached unprecedented levels. Hunters make good money from the tiger's beautiful skin and demand is constantly growing. Also, its bones are illegally exported to use as ingredients in traditional Asian medicines.

This is against a backdrop of a very serious loss of habitat. In the last ten to 15 years, natural forest cover in Sumatra has been slashed by almost a staggering 40%. And recently, great swathes of forest have been consumed by fire, destroying more of the forest habitat.

Latest surveys have indicated that there may now be as few as 350 existing in the wild. Kerinci Seblat National Park is one of the last places on Earth where they can still be found.

photo: Debbie Martyn/FFI

*"Ranger teams walked almost 1100 miles on forest patrols in and bordering the national park and destroyed more than 60 active tiger snares - an increase of 600% since 2011. That is why we need to step up patrol regimes".*

If FFI cannot recruit more rangers to protect the tigers against the increased efforts of the poachers all our good work could be undone.

For all of these reasons, it's now absolutely vital that we

**Latest tiger population figures released: just 350 Sumatran tigers remain - down from 500. Urgent support needed for action plan.**

- £83,131 is needed to help us fund more rangers and step up action against the poachers in Kerinci Seblat National Park.
- This is one of the final strongholds of the incredibly rare Sumatran tiger, a place where the battle to save the Sumatran tiger will be won or lost.
- FFI's work here could be all that stands between the Sumatran tiger and extinction.

If we're going to save the Critically Endangered Sumatran tiger from complete extinction, it's vital that we have the means to take action now.

**FFI must raise £83,131. To do that, the charity is asking for you to make an urgent contribution today.**



**Sir David Attenborough, OM FRS**  
**Fauna & Flora International vice-president**

Together, we can save the Sumatran tiger from extinction – but only if we take action immediately.

To take action for the Sumatran tiger please go to [www.FFIsumatrantiger.org](http://www.FFIsumatrantiger.org) or cut the coupon.

If the coupon to the bottom right is missing, please send your cheque (payable to FFI) to: Sumatran Tiger Appeal, FREEPOST FAUNA & FLORA INTERNATIONAL, The David Attenborough Building, Cambridge, CB2 3QZ by 25 April.



The team identified an individual who was identified as a go-between for poachers and traders. After steadily collecting evidence they were able to apprehend him in early 2016, striking a blow against the illegal wildlife trade in the area.

Fauna & Flora International, founded in 1903, was the world's first international conservation organisation. Today its work spans the globe, with over 140 projects in more than 40 countries. It has a strong history of finding creative solutions to conservation problems and of working with local communities. FFI is supported by the most eminent scientists and members of the conservation movement.

**These items are vital to help save the remaining Sumatran tigers from extinction.**

**£6,500** could buy a replacement 4WD jeep to transport rangers to distant patrol sites - our current vehicle has severe engine problems.

**£3,000** could help get two extra rangers into the field to prevent poaching.

**£400** could buy camping equipment or boots for 28 rangers.

**£72 could buy first aid kits to treat injured rangers whilst out on patrol.**

**£32** could help buy charging units for telephones; essential to getting extra help if poachers are spotted.

Donations large or small will help us save the Critically Endangered Sumatran tiger from the 600% upsurge in the poaching threat.

**Cut the coupon below and return it to FFI, together with your gift, to help save the Critically Endangered Sumatran tiger. Alternatively, go to [www.FFIsumatrantiger.org](http://www.FFIsumatrantiger.org). Thank you.**

I want to help save the remaining 350 Sumatran tigers today, with a donation of £\_\_\_\_\_

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We store your details securely and will never sell, trade or rent your personal information to other organisations. If you'd prefer not to be mailed ☐ or telephoned ☐ please tick the appropriate box or contact us at any time.

Please return to: Sumatran Tiger Appeal,  
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Cambridge, CB2 3QZ

**You can call 01223 49019 to donate now.**

Or go to: [www.FFlsumatrantiger.org](http://www.FFlsumatrantiger.org) to donate online.

Registered Charity No.1011102. Registered Company No. 2677068. PR ST16H  
Please note: If Fauna & Flora International succeeds in raising more than £83,131 from appeal, funds will be used wherever they are most needed.





# OUT & ABOUT

## HISTORY EXPLORER

### The dissolution of the monasteries

Adam Morton and Nige Tassell visit **Fountains Abbey**, the most recognisable reminder of Henry VIII's campaign to eradicate Rome from English life

There are few more awesome sights in the depths of winter than the ruins of Fountains Abbey in North Yorkshire. Abandoned and ruined it may be, yet the abbey stands proud and majestic, its crumpled walls bearing the scars of Henry VIII's campaign to dissolve the monasteries nearly 500 years ago.

We're visiting in February half-term, so the shrieks of children fill the chilly air while a procession of dog-walkers take to the paths of the 273-hectare (674-acre) National Trust estate in which the abbey sits. The only sign of conflict is when a cocker spaniel strains at his lead in an attempt to disturb a brace of pheasants lurking in the undergrowth.

Things weren't always so peaceful. During the early decades of the 16th century, Fountains was the country's richest Cistercian monastery – before it became one of the biggest casualties of Henry's attempt to wipe the influence of Rome from the English landscape. The sweeping programme of closures – orchestrated by the king's right-hand man, Thomas Cromwell – left Fountains, and hundreds of other monasteries and abbeys, empty and at the mercy of the elements.

The decision to dissolve England's monasteries was a consequence of Henry's split from the Catholic church after Pope Clement VII refused to annul the king's marriage to Catherine of Aragon in 1527. Not

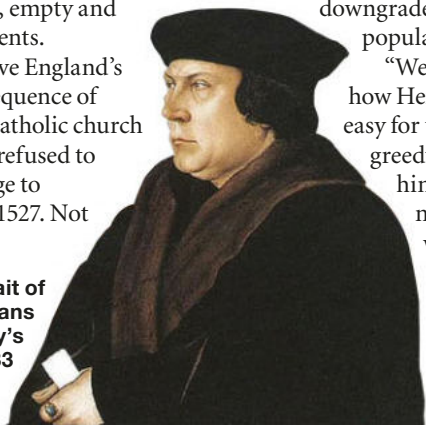
that this was merely an act of revenge by an angry monarch, as the University of Newcastle's Adam Morton explains as we stroll down the estate's gentle slopes towards the ruins.

"There's a danger of seeing Henry as a stage villain," he says. "He's often viewed in black-and-white terms – as someone who was motivated by lust or who was unstable. But above all else, the Dissolution was an exertion of power. Henry now had this new type of kingship – royal supremacy. It made him head of church and state – and there was no better demonstration of that than dissolving the monasteries."

By the mid-1530s, a quarter of a century into his reign, Henry had spent much of his inheritance, while the monasteries were known for being cash-rich. Again, though, Morton warns that we shouldn't interpret the king's actions as mono-causal. Rather than being a simple cash grab, the financial aspect was part of a wider restructuring of society. "However, accusing the monasteries of avarice or of hypocrisy – preaching charity while being very, very rich – was certainly part of the polemical strategy to downgrade them in the eyes of the populace or parliament.

"We also have to consider how Henry saw himself. It's very easy for us to think of him as greedy or avaricious, but he saw himself as an Old Testament monarch. Rightly or wrongly, he viewed his break from Rome as biblical – as the way in which a king should act. He often described

This copy of a portrait of Thomas Cromwell by Hans Holbein shows Henry's enforcer in around 1532–33



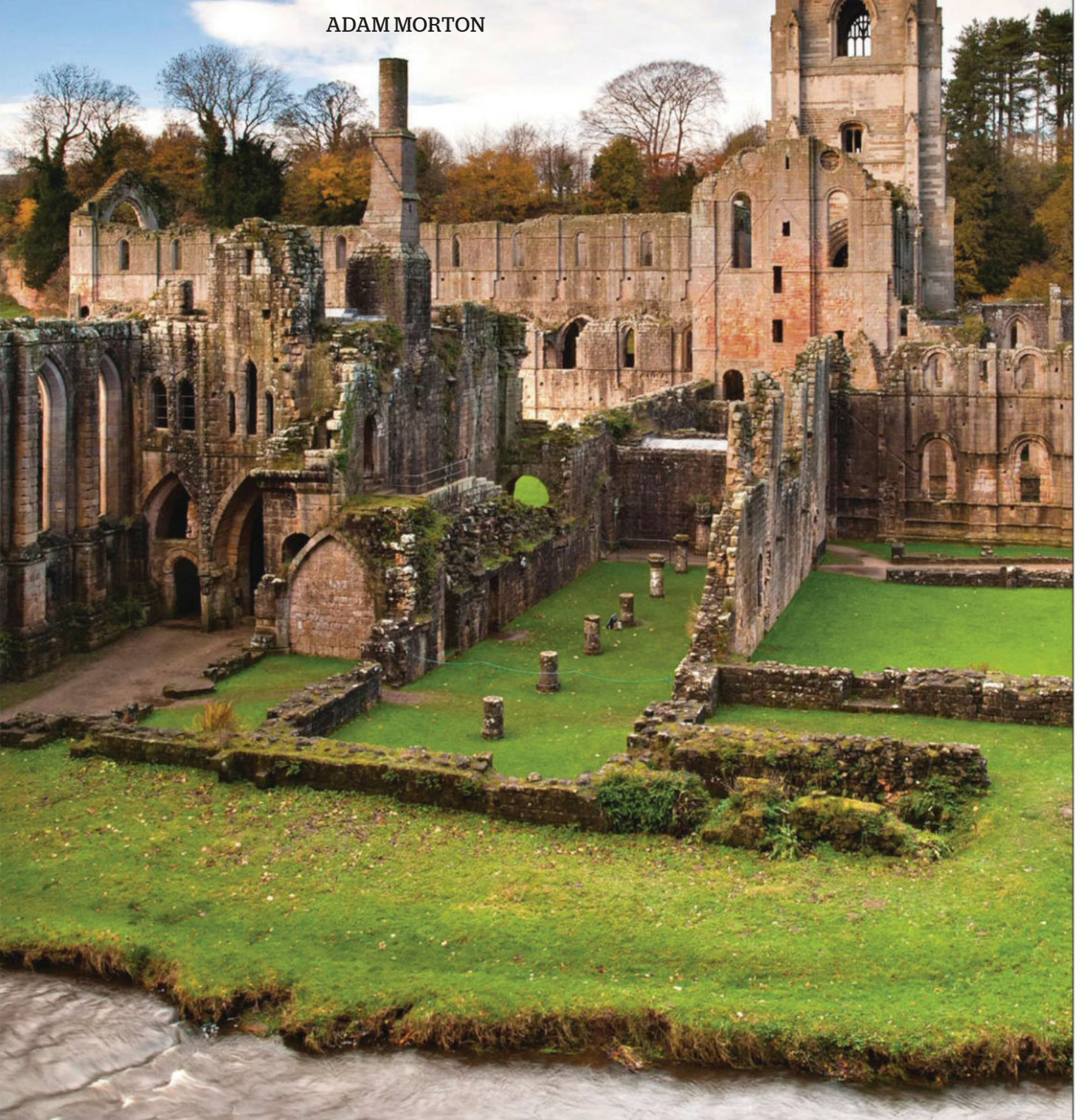
The ruins of Fountains Abbey in North Yorkshire. Henry's motives when dismantling such monasteries "were much more complex than pure revenge or pure avarice alone", says Adam Morton

ALAMY

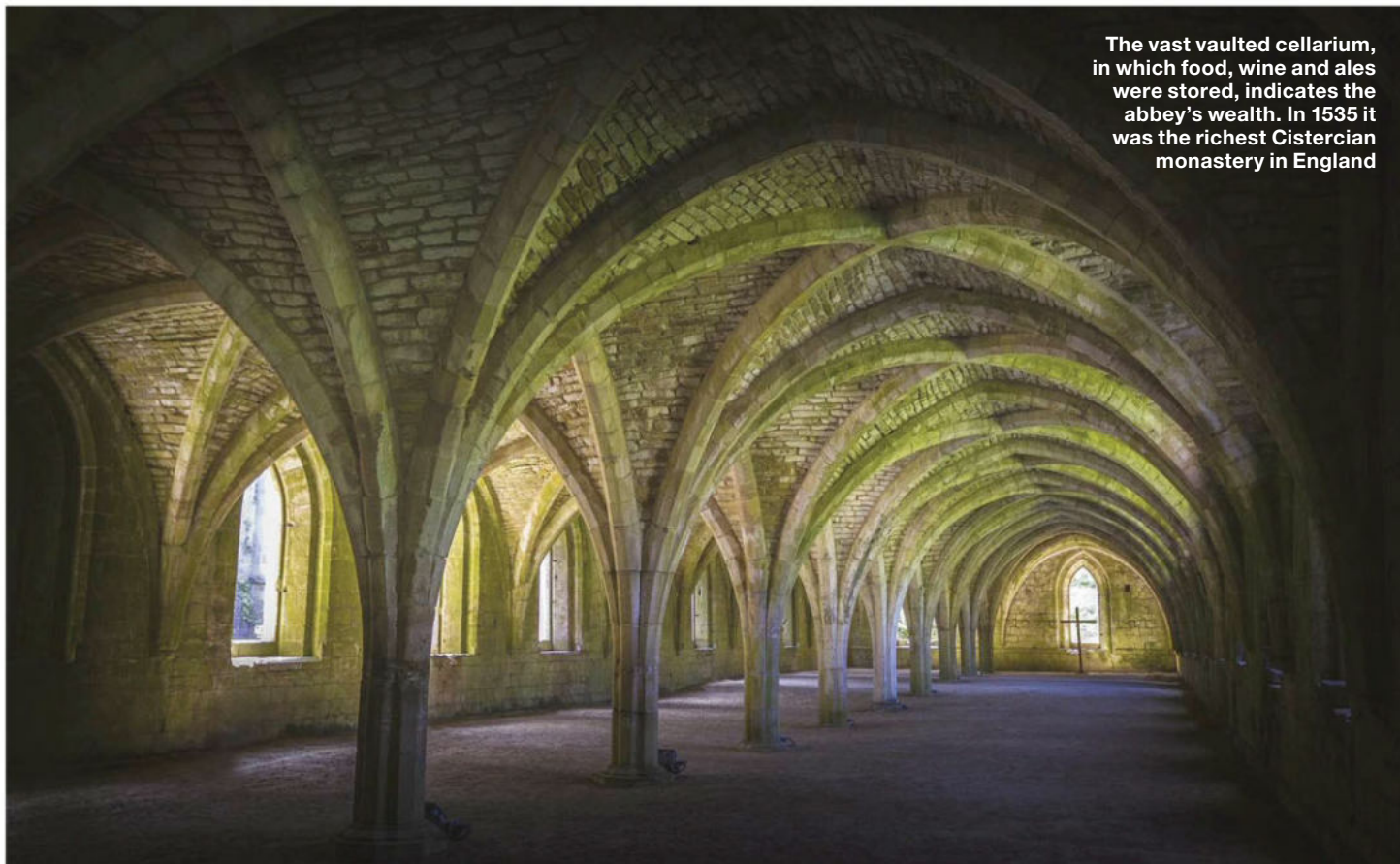


# “The Dissolution was an exertion of power, of royal supremacy”

ADAM MORTON







The vast vaulted cellarium, in which food, wine and ales were stored, indicates the abbey's wealth. In 1535 it was the richest Cistercian monastery in England

ALAMY

himself as King David or King Hezekiah. These were iconoclasts. And what do iconoclasts do? They break superstition and deliver the word to their people. His own motivations were much more complex than pure revenge or pure avarice alone."

### **Cromwell's campaign**

As we step inside the ruins, Morton explains the methods of Cromwell and his men. The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* was a crucial tool: a survey to discover how rich each monastery was – and how immoral the behaviour of its residents. "The ability to commission a report of that size tells us of Henry's will for royal supremacy," says Morton. It was a huge undertaking. And for Cromwell "it was particularly opportunistic. When it came to persuading parliament and the populace that these places should be closed, he made the exceptional seem the norm. He found the juiciest stories, the juiciest examples of corruption, and would say: 'These people are all like this.'"

Indeed, a 1535 investigation by a pair of royal commissioners into the moral code

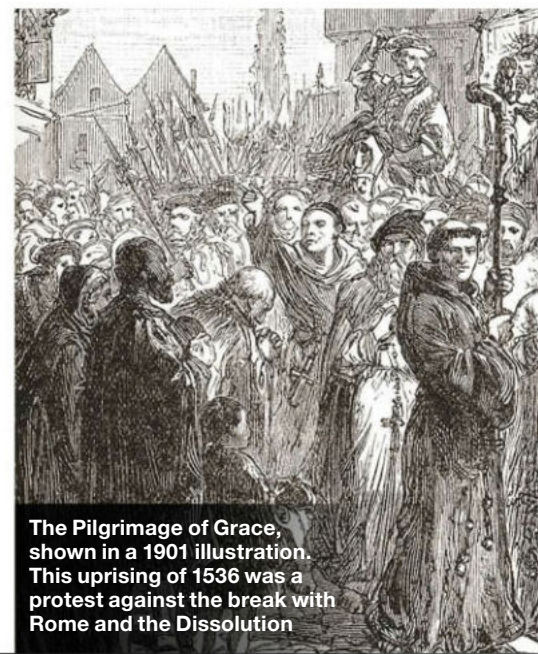
being applied at Fountains ended with eight members of the community being charged with immoral acts including self-abuse, affairs with women both married and single, and sodomy with young boys – exactly the kind of juicy stories on which Henry's loyal confidant could go to town.

While delivering this programme of political spin, Cromwell and his men also applied scare tactics to the monasteries themselves. "The abbot and the monks would have experienced a huge exertion of pressure," explains Morton, "placing them under a psychological strain. Their obedience was being questioned. Do you accept the royal supremacy? If you don't, does that mean you're a traitor?"

"Houses were visited by Cromwell's men, who applied pressure for closure. They called people to interviews. They publicly demanded loyalty. In the early stages of closure, the crown was looking for those monasteries where the resistance wasn't going to be the most acute. It was pushing a policy of voluntary surrender – getting the abbot to surrender the monastery to the crown.

"The more educated and confident could ask whether it was technically legal. Who actually owned the monasteries? Who owned the founders' rights? And does the state have the right to run roughshod over them? This is why psychological pressure was really important. Cromwell was essentially trying to get around things by forcing people to give up the monasteries."

Two years after the 1536 act of parliament that legitimised the first wave of closures, the



The Pilgrimage of Grace, shown in a 1901 illustration. This uprising of 1536 was a protest against the break with Rome and the Dissolution

**"CROMWELL MADE THE EXCEPTIONAL SEEM THE NORM. HE FOUND THE JUICIEST STORIES, THE JUICIEST EXAMPLES OF CORRUPTION"**



campaign was stepped up with the appointment of Richard Ingworth. “He was – and I’m looking for a non-partisan word here – an effective administrator,” says Morton. “He closed a lot of the larger monasteries without the sanction of parliament, before the bill to do so was actually passed.”

## Rebellion against reformation

The Dissolution was not welcomed. Not only was the Catholic church very popular, but the monasteries also performed numerous functions for communities, providing education, charity, medical facilities and hospitality for passing travellers. Their intended closures were opposed for more than just religious reasons. “Early-modern people generally didn’t like novelty, they didn’t like change. So something as destructive as this was very, very hard to sell to them.”

Here, in the north of England, there was open dissent – the ‘Pilgrimage of Grace’ – not just against the philosophical justification for the Dissolution but also against the physical dismantling of the monasteries.

“There is a case to be made that the Pilgrimage of Grace was the most significant rebellion in England faced by the Tudor monarchs,” declares Morton. “Estimates suggest that between 30,000 and 50,000 people were involved. In the first instance, Henry was forced to negotiate, to placate the rebels. There wasn’t a standing army in the 16th century. The state didn’t have the power to deal with that many people.”



## VISIT

### Fountains Abbey



Fountains, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 3DY  
● [fountainsabbey.org.uk](http://fountainsabbey.org.uk)

“The response was emotional, above anything else. It was a sense of loss. Rebellions in this period were fundamentally conservative. We think of popular revolt in a very 19th or 20th-century way, about pushing for change. But rebellion in this earlier period was almost always triggered by a breach of custom – by the state doing something unprecedented. These people rebelled *against* change. They wanted things to go back.” And once the king had successfully placated the rebels, many of the ringleaders were publicly executed. “It was a huge display of Henry’s displeasure and of his power,” says Morton. “*This* was royal supremacy.”

After just five years, 800 monasteries had been closed and the crown had grabbed their assets. Increasingly, though, to fund overseas wars Henry sold off the land to private individuals who, as a result, climbed the social ladder. In 1540, one year after its abbot and 30 monks were pensioned off, the Fountains estate was sold to the merchant Sir Richard Gresham, who promptly peddled some of the fabric of the abbey for building materials. The crown had already melted down the valuable lead from its roofs and pipes, while a subsequent owner used the abbey’s stonework to build Fountains Hall.

As we walk back up the hill, sidestepping an impromptu kids’ kickabout on the lawns, we glance back at the abbey – a victim of short-termism and plunder, but somehow defiant in the low February sun. It now stands as a memorial to a time when the fabric of English religious life changed forever. **H**



Historical advisor: **Dr Adam Morton** (left), lecturer in the history of Britain at Newcastle University.  
Words: Nige Tassell

## THE DISSOLUTION FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE

### 1 Bath Abbey, SOMERSET

#### Where a king’s work was undone

Bath Priory was surrendered to the crown in 1539 during the Dissolution, after which it was stripped of its fabric and abandoned. In 1574, Elizabeth I sought to repair the damage caused by her father’s campaign, and ordered that funds be raised to restore the building to its former glory.

[bathabbey.org](http://bathabbey.org)

### 2 Furness Abbey, CUMBRIA

#### Where the ruins run red

This 12th-century abbey at the northern edge of Barrow-in-Furness was England’s second-richest Cistercian monastery after Fountains Abbey. Built from red sandstone in a shallow valley, it’s the subject of the William Wordsworth poem *At Furness Abbey*, where because of “rash undoing / Man left this Structure to become Time’s prey”.

[english-heritage.org.uk](http://english-heritage.org.uk)

### 3 Glastonbury Abbey, SOMERSET

#### Where an abbot met a grisly end

Destroyed by fire in the 12th century but quickly rebuilt, Glastonbury became the richest abbey in England after Westminster. Its last abbot resisted the raid on its valuables during the Dissolution, and was hanged, drawn and quartered on nearby Glastonbury Tor, reputedly for treason.

[glastonburyabbey.com](http://glastonburyabbey.com)

### 4 Leicester Abbey

#### Where “unnatural vice” occurred

Officially known as the Abbey of St Mary de Pratish, Leicester Abbey was very much in decline by the time of the Dissolution thanks to mismanagement by successive abbots. The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* made reference to “adultery and unnatural vice” here, and not even the attempted bribery of Thomas Cromwell could halt its closure in 1538. The outlines of the foundations can be seen in Abbey Park.

[leicester.gov.uk](http://leicester.gov.uk)

### 5 Walsingham Priory, NORFOLK

#### Where the pilgrims flocked

Home to a shrine of the Virgin Mary, for centuries Walsingham was a popular destination for pilgrims, among them six kings – including Henry VIII himself. However, the shrine was removed during the Dissolution, the priory largely dismantled and the site then sold by Henry for £90.

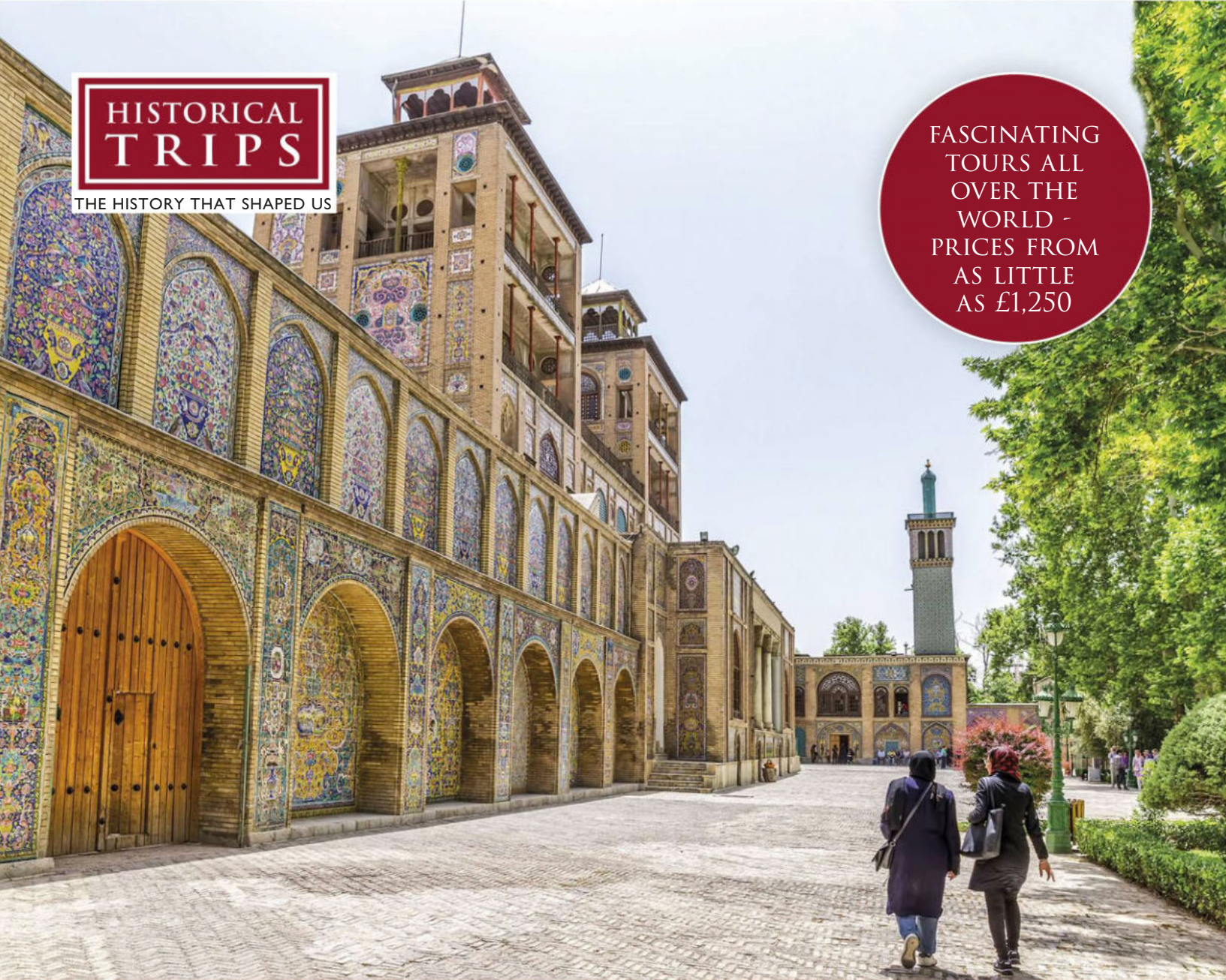
[walsinghamabbey.com](http://walsinghamabbey.com)



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# FIVE THINGS TO DO IN APRIL

## Queen of style

### EXHIBITION

#### **Fashioning a Reign: 90 Years of Style from the Queen's Wardrobe**

Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh

21 April–16 October

☎ 0303 123 7334

● [royalcollection.org.uk](http://royalcollection.org.uk)



**T**his exhibition opens on 21 April, the day of the monarch's 90th birthday, and it demonstrates her support for British couture and millinery throughout her reign, with costumes by renowned designers that she wore at high profile events around the world.

On show will be day and evening wear by British couturiers including Sir Norman Hartnell, Ian Thomas and Stewart Parvin. Items range from a hat by milliner Philip Somerville, worn for a Holyrood garden party for 8,000 guests in 2009, to a sombre black silk-velvet and taffeta dress, worn with a veil for an audience with Pope John Paul II in 1980.

Outfits worn at state occasions in Scotland take centre stage, including a magnificent Hartnell evening gown of pale-blue silk worn at a performance of *Rob Roy* at the Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh during the state visit of King Olav of Norway in 1962. Another highlight is an elegant pale-green Hartnell gown of silk chiffon, worn in 1957 while the Queen was on a visit to the US as a guest of President Eisenhower.

This is the first of three exhibitions to be held at royal official residences in 2016, each with different costumes and accessories from childhood to the present. (The other two are at Buckingham Palace from 23 July, and Windsor Castle from 17 September).



This Norman Hartnell evening gown, worn by the Queen on a visit to the US in 1957, is among the royal outfits on display at Holyroodhouse

### EXHIBITION

#### **Sicily: Culture and Conquest**

British Museum, London

21 April–14 August

☎ 020 7323 8299

● [britishmuseum.org](http://britishmuseum.org)

Sicily was settled by many different cultures and this exploration of 4,000 years of history focuses on the Greeks in the seventh century and the Normans in the 11th. The range of decorative objects on display runs from marble sculptures to Byzantine mosaics, via ceremonial glassware and gold jewellery.



A gilded bronze falcon from Sicily or southern Italy, c1200

### EXHIBITION

#### **The Ornate and the Beautiful**

Bishop's Palace, Wells

16 April–2 September

☎ 01749 988111

● [bishopspalace.org.uk](http://bishopspalace.org.uk)

Rare ecclesiastical textiles go on display this month, telling the story of fashions in church vestments from the 14th century to the present. Included will be altar fronts and chasubles (outfits worn by the priest to celebrate mass) featuring cloth of gold and ornate embroidery. The exhibition will include items not seen on public display since 1930.

### EXHIBITION / FREE ENTRY

#### **Roman Treasures of Cheshire**

Museum of Liverpool

Continues to 19 June

☎ 0151 478 4545

● [liverpoolmuseums.org.uk](http://liverpoolmuseums.org.uk)

Two recently discovered Romano-British Cheshire hoards are on display in an exhibition exploring their context in the Romano-British north-west. The Malpas Hoard, a group of Iron Age and Roman coins buried shortly after the Roman conquest, was found in 2014. The Knutsford Hoard, found in 2012, comprises coins and jewellery items buried in the late second century AD.

### EXHIBITION

#### **Celts: Art and Identity**

National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh

Continues to 25 September

☎ 0300 123 6789

● [nms.ac.uk](http://nms.ac.uk)

This major exhibition, in partnership with the British Museum, spans 2,500 years and tells the story of the different peoples called 'Celts' through the ages. Hundreds of objects are on display, from gold torcs to statuettes, chariot fittings, helmets and shields – all displaying remarkable craftsmanship. Many have never been shown in Scotland before, including Denmark's Gundestrup cauldron.



## MY FAVOURITE PLACE

# Malta



by **James Holland**

For the latest in our historical holidays series, James Holland visits an island whose history spans several millennia

For the lover of history, sunshine and sparkling turquoise sea, the tiny island of Malta is hard to beat.

From prehistory to an epic siege during the Second World War, it is a place rich in incredible art and human drama, and which has seen astonishing sieges and battles in the skies above and on the sea all around.

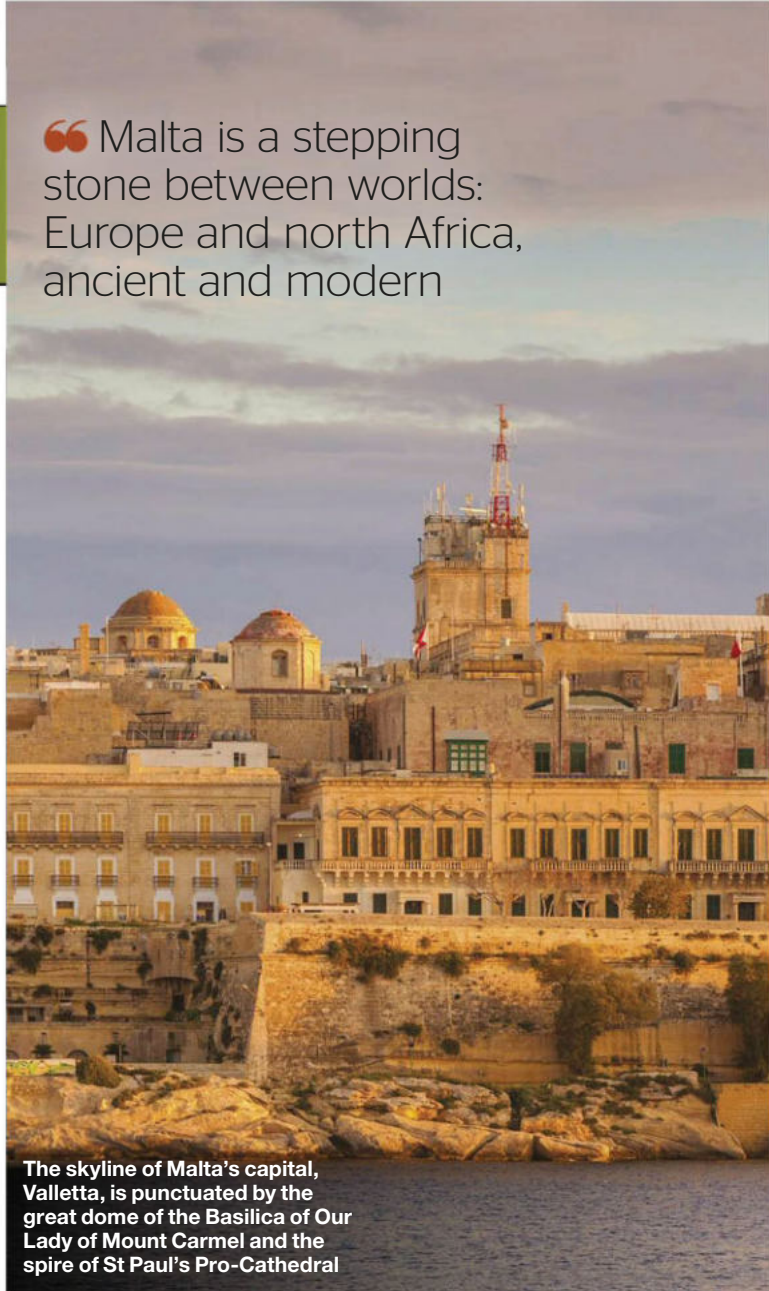
It is also a place where this incredibly rich seam of history can be seen on almost every corner. There are ancient tombs and stone circles, huge bastions, more churches per square mile than anywhere else in the world, masterpieces by Caravaggio, and underground bunker systems that helped save the island from an Axis invasion. Malta has it all.

I first came here some 15 years ago, when I was researching the wartime siege. It was evening when I landed at Luqa, site of the international airport, and by the time I reached Valletta, Malta's capital, it was getting dark. I remember walking down to the Upper Barrakka Gardens, the terraces that overlook Grand Harbour, and gazing down at this iconic finger of deep water and across to the creamy limestone elegance of the Three Cities (a group of historic fortified cities) on the far

side. It was so immediately identifiable with black and white photographs of the 1930s and 1940s that for quite a while I simply stood there, taking it all in.

This harbour has seen so much. It is a haven in the centre of the Mediterranean, visited by sailors and merchants through many millennia. Odysseus came here, as did Saint Paul; it was here that, in 1941, the aircraft carrier *Illustrious* took shelter from the Luftwaffe. It was also from these bastions that the Grand Master de Valette and his 2,000 men fought off the might of the Ottoman empire in 1565.

A good way to see not just Grand Harbour but also Marsamxett Harbour, on the other side of Valletta, is to take a *dghajsa* – a brightly painted



The skyline of Malta's capital, Valletta, is punctuated by the great dome of the Basilica of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the spire of St Paul's Pro-Cathedral

Maltese gondola. You will pass under the Siege Bell that chimes every day at noon, and then past the harbour wall. It was through here on Malta's most important feast day in August 1942 that the stricken tanker *Ohio* inched slowly to safety, her cargo intact. It was a turning point in breaking the wartime siege.

As you pass the tip of the Valletta peninsula you glide over wrecks beneath the waves, while rising over you is the elegant, towering skyline of the city. On Manoel island in the heart of Marsamxett Harbour stand the

crumbling remains of the Lazaretto, a former quarantine station where graffiti inscribed by former inmates, including Byron, still scars the walls. This was also where Malta's celebrated 10th Submarine Flotilla was based during the Second World War; it is easy to half close one's eyes and imagine HMS *Upholder* moored alongside, her submariners sitting on the terrace beneath the curved arches.

Malta is smaller than the Isle of Wight and it never takes long to get around. Perched on an outcrop at the centre of the island is the majestic ancient walled city Mdina, known as the 'Silent City'. Vehicles are banned from its marble streets, which offer an oasis of calm after the

The Siege Bell Memorial was created in 1992 to commemorate the valour of Malta in resisting the Great Siege

ROBERT HARDING/GETTY





## ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

### BEST TIME TO GO

Malta is blisteringly hot in August; May or September would be ideal months to explore the island.

### GETTING THERE

Malta International Airport is on the old wartime airfield of Luqa. Air Malta, Ryanair and easyJet offer regular flights from the UK. Alternatively, Sicily is just 60 miles and a short ferry journey away.

### WHAT TO TAKE

Lots of sunscreen, a hat, swimming trunks and a mask and snorkel. Prepare to cover up with respectful garb when visiting churches and palaces.

### WHAT TO BRING BACK

Malta is known for hand-blown glass – watch it being made at Ta' Qali craft village – while Gozo is renowned for hand-made lace.

### READERS' VIEWS

Explore the beautiful, historic streets of Valletta on foot and then indulge in a cocktail at the Phoenician Hotel while admiring the art deco interior  
@Annie Witcomb

I have visited Malta more than 30 times! I would strongly recommend the National War Museum and Fort St Elmo in Valletta  
@marksimmer

Mdina is a must – it's so enchanting! Gozo is quaint and beautiful  
Emma Williams

hubbub of Valletta. From Mdina's walls the island spreads before you – the views are spectacular. Saint Paul lived here after his shipwreck, and Malta's great families have always resided here, too – it is a place of magnificent villas and palaces.

During the Second World War, RAF pilots flying from Ta' Qali airfield were based at the 17th-century Xara Palace. It's no longer an RAF airfield but the superb Malta Aviation Museum now displays a Hurricane and a Spitfire, both fully restored.

Malta has plenty of beaches and some of the best diving in the Mediterranean, with wrecks and ancient rock carvings to explore. Back on terra firma, the ancient sites of Hagar Qim and Tarxien – with temples dating back to around 3600 BC – are reminders that this is a truly ancient place. Malta is a stepping stone between worlds: Europe and north Africa, ancient and modern.

For this reason Malta was of great strategic importance in the Second World War. Reminders of the terrible two-and-a-half-year siege are all around, from the old underground war rooms at Lascaris to air raid shelters dug into the limestone and a pair of Spitfire cannons still visible in the field where the plane crashed.

The Maltese isle of Gozo was reputedly Calypso's island in *The Odyssey*, and it seems that temptress is still luring visitors with her irresistible charm. Malta is a place that quickly works its way into the heart: visit once, and you'll be sure to return over and over again. **II**

**James Holland** is a historian and broadcaster. He is author of *Fortress Malta: An Island Under Siege 1940–43* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2009)

Read more about James's experiences in Malta at [historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/malta](http://historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/malta)

**Next month:** Frank McDonough explores Berlin

### Been there...

Have you been to **Malta**? Do you have a top tip for readers? Contact us via Twitter or Facebook

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# The 2016 CULTURE GUIDE

2016 is set to be a great year for historical anniversaries and there really is no better time to explore some of Britain's best heritage sites, exhibitions and festivals.

Why not consider some of the membership opportunities to feed your passion? Head out and support Britain's heritage this year.



IMAGE:ISTOCK

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## Osterley Park and House



A suburban palace caught between town and country, Osterley Park and House is one of the last surviving country estates in London. Explore the 18th-century house designed by architect Robert Adam, fashioned for show and entertaining, and the elegant pleasure gardens including cut flower borders, the Tudor walled garden and the Great Meadow. Hundreds of acres of parkland are perfect for whiling away a peaceful afternoon, with plenty of delicious homemade food available from the Stables Courtyard.

### Contact details

web: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/osterley](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/osterley)  
email: [osterley@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:osterley@nationaltrust.org.uk)

## National Civil War Centre



It is 370 years since the fall of Newark during the British Civil Wars and to mark the anniversary two spectacular weekends are planned. Pikes and Plunder: Annual Civil War Festival on 1st and 2nd May 2016 will see scores of colourful re-enactors descend on the National Civil War Centre, Friary Gardens and Newark Castle. Both days will feature living history, musket drills and parades. Fantastic and colourful – make sure you make a date to join us! Then on 8th May re-enactors will return to commemorate the very day when Newark surrendered after a bitter six month siege. Drills, displays and wreath laying will make it a day-long event to remember.

### Contact details

web: [www.nationalcivilwarcentre.com](http://www.nationalcivilwarcentre.com)  
email: [civilwarinfo@nsdc.info](mailto:civilwarinfo@nsdc.info)

**NATIONAL  
CIVIL WAR  
CENTRE**  
NEWARK MUSEUM



# The 2016 CULTURE GUIDE



## Kynren

On 2nd July 2016 Eleven Arches will premiere “Kynren – An Epic Tale of England” – a live-action night show of dazzling proportions. Set against the magnificent backdrop of Auckland Castle, home to the Bishops of Durham for nearly 900 years, the venue sits astride the path of Dere Street the roman road from York to Scotland. On a 7.5-acre open-air stage with full scale lake, in a show which includes mass choreography, horses, ships, a steam train, carriages, pyrotechnics and spectacular lighting and water effects; 1,000 cast and crew will bring the story of the nation to life in a grand spectacle of great scale. Audiences of up to 8,000 a night will be transported in a storytelling journey through 2,000 years of British history from early myth and religion, through Roman, Viking and

Norman invaders; to the great kings and queens of Tudor, Elizabethan and Victorian times; high culture of Shakespeare to the industrial genius of George Stephenson, to the great sacrifice of two World Wars. The production includes over 1,800 costumes, armies of actors professionally trained in combat, and 34 of the finest show horses, as well as chariots, carriages and a coronation coach. The visually sumptuous theatrical experience is accompanied in surround-sound by an evocative original music score created by one of the music and film world's rising stars. Only the second of its kind in the world and unique to the UK, the ‘Kynren’ night show is already tipped as the must see attraction for 2016. There will be fourteen shows in Bishop Auckland, County Durham running July – September with tickets £25 - £55.

### Contact details

web: [www.kynren.co.uk](http://www.kynren.co.uk)  
email: [enquiries@kynren.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@kynren.co.uk)

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## The 2016 MEMBERSHIP GUIDE



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## English Heritage

Telling the story of England's magnificent history, English Heritage cares for over 400 historic places across England, including Stonehenge, Dover Castle, Hadrian's Wall, Tintagel castle and many more.

This year the charity is marking the 950th anniversary of the Norman Conquest with a year of exciting events and activities at many historic Norman sites across the country, including the Battle of Hastings battlefield itself. As well as a new exhibition, for the first time visitors will be able to stand on the roof of the Great Gatehouse of Battle Abbey – getting a whole new perspective on the most famous battle in English history.

With membership to English Heritage you can explore over 5,000 years of history – there's always

something to see and do. From clambering over Roman ruins to discovering secret wartime tunnels, there are lots of amazing discoveries at every turn and a chance to experience history first hand. When you become a member you'll also receive free or reduced price entry to events, free entry for up to six children (under 19 and within the family group), a free handbook and Members' Magazine four times a year.

English Heritage is offering an exclusive 25% off new annual memberships until 1st May 2016. To receive your offer, call quoting code BBHIST25 or visit the website and enter the code at the checkout.



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### Contact details

web: [www.history.org.uk/go/HA](http://www.history.org.uk/go/HA)  
tel: 0300 100 0223

## Historical Association

If you don't already have membership of the Historical Association then it's probably time to give it some thought. The association can offer you so much – whether it's through expanding your knowledge, bringing you together with other history enthusiasts or helping you with research, the HA community is here for you. All you need is a love of history.

One of the HA's strongest assets is its thriving branch network. The HA calls on the support of over 300 volunteers who run its 50 local branches and put together a vibrant and distinctive programme of historical walks, talks and visits. Members gain access to all these events as part of their membership alongside annual conferences, tours and national events.

In terms of subject knowledge

the HA provides a treasure trove of resources, including thought-provoking articles and pamphlets, as well as podcasts that can be accessed via a truly fabulous podcast section on their website. These podcasts are easy to download and offer bite-size audio clips of 15-20 minutes by leading historians.

*The Historian* is the flagship journal of the HA, and each quarterly issue is themed with in-depth articles from experts in their field. Recent editions have honed in on historical anniversaries including the Battles of Agincourt and Waterloo, as well as more general topics of interest such as women in history.

The Historical Association is the most significant organisation for all things historical, providing members with the best possible resources and support. Why not get involved?



## Manchester Histories Festival



**D**elivered by charity Manchester Histories, Manchester Histories Festival (MHF) is unique amongst histories festivals in the UK for working in collaborative partnerships with communities, individuals and organisations.

Taking place from the 3–12 June the 2016 festival will offer ten days of music, film, debate, talks, performance, walking tours, visual arts and much more. MHF aims to both celebrate the familiar and reveal the new and hidden histories and heritage from across Greater Manchester. Whether people would describe themselves as histories fans or not the festival will have something for everyone.

### Contact details

web: [www.manchesterhistories.co.uk](http://www.manchesterhistories.co.uk)



## Westminster Abbey Association



**B**e part of our future. Westminster Abbey is one of the nation's most important buildings and the greatest repository of British history. Now, for the first time in 1,000 years, you can experience more with membership of the Westminster Abbey Association.

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## Historic Royal Palaces

**M**embership to Historic Royal Palaces is a brilliant way to visit all six historic royal palaces and it's fantastic value for money. Your membership would cover entry into the Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, the Banqueting House, Kensington Palace, Kew Palace and Hillsborough Castle. All of which are packed full of great days out and opportunities for families to really spend quality time together.

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There are so many exciting things happening this year. One that we're

particularly excited about is the unveiling of the Magic Garden at Hampton Court Palace, a spectacular new adventure play garden inspired by the mystery of Tudor England and stories of the palace.

Membership is great value for money and you only need to make one visit to each palace to save money, so become a member today and get to know these palaces better. We look forward to welcoming you to our historic royal family.

Historic Royal Palaces is the independent charity that looks after all six palaces. We receive no funding from the Government or the Crown, so we depend on the support of our visitors, members, donors, volunteers and sponsors.

Join as a member today, prices start from £48.



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# The 2016 CULTURE GUIDE

## Woburn Abbey and Gardens



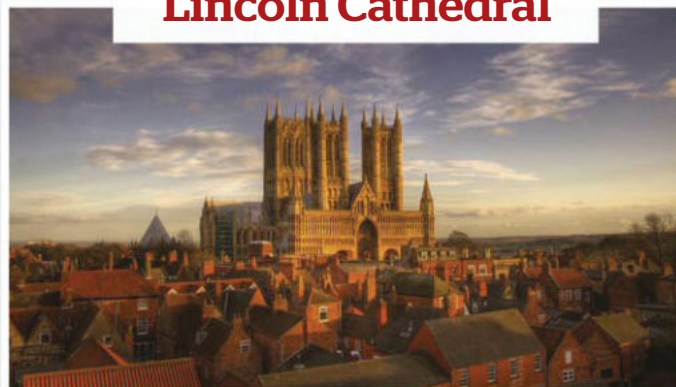
**W**oburn Abbey is the current family home of the 15th Duke and Duchess of Bedford. The Earls and Dukes of Bedford and their families have been at the centre of social and political events for almost 400 years. Learn more about their lives and discover great tales of imprisonment, beheadings, love affairs, Royal Pardons, Prime Ministers, Royal state visits and much more by exploring the 22 rooms within the Abbey. A magnificent stately home celebrated for housing one of the most important private art collections in the world, including the work of famous artists such as: Reynolds, Gainsborough, Rembrandt, Van Dyck and the famous collection of Venetian views by Canaletto.

### Contact details

web: [www.woburnabbey.co.uk](http://www.woburnabbey.co.uk)  
email: [admissions@woburn.co.uk](mailto:admissions@woburn.co.uk)



## Lincoln Cathedral



**L**incoln Cathedral is one of the finest examples of Gothic architecture in Europe. Built by command of William the Conqueror, the West front is largely the original 11th century building. The Cathedral stood as the tallest in the world for almost 300 years and is still a breathtaking feature of the Lincolnshire skyline today.

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### Contact details

web: [www.lincolncathedral.com](http://www.lincolncathedral.com)  
tel: 01522 561600

## Lichfield Cathedral

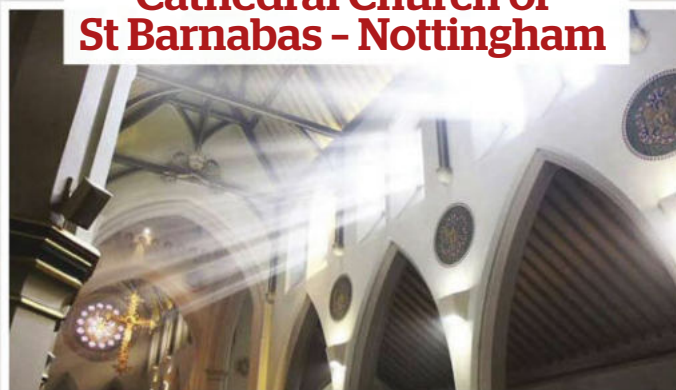


**L**ichfield Cathedral is the only medieval three-spired Cathedral in the United Kingdom, and is a treasured landmark in the heart of England. It is one of the oldest places of Christian worship, and sits within one of the best preserved closes in the country. Here you can see the St Chad Gospels, a medieval wall painting, the famous Herkenrode stained glass, the Lichfield Angel, examples from the Staffordshire Hoard, and much more. Enjoy picturesque gardens, stunning buildings and a vibrant history. Entrance is free, but we do ask each visitor to make a donation.

### Contact details

web: [www.lichfield-cathedral.org](http://www.lichfield-cathedral.org)  
email: [enquiries@lichfield-cathedral.org](mailto:enquiries@lichfield-cathedral.org)

## Cathedral Church of St Barnabas - Nottingham



**M**ore to Nottingham than just Robin Hood. The Cathedral Church of St Barnabas is the Cathedral for the Diocese of Nottingham. Built in 1844 and designed by Augustus Welby Pugin, famous for his work in the Houses of Parliament. The Cathedral has seen many reordering's with the most recent taking place in 1993 to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Cathedral. This reordering looked to recapture the quintessence of Pugin's vision, which had been lost over the years. This included the restoring of some of the paint work which had been covered over. One of the most beautiful parts of the Cathedral is the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. Which gives the best example of the work of Pugin; it really gives a glimpse of Pugin's vision of Catholic Churches.

### Contact details

web: [www.stbarnabascathedral.org.uk](http://www.stbarnabascathedral.org.uk)  
tel: 0115 953 9839





## English Heritage Holiday Cottages

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the inspiration for the *Tale of Little Pig Robinson*; English Heritage holiday cottages put you at the heart of key moments in history.

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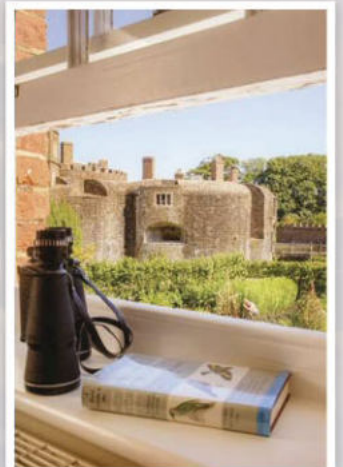
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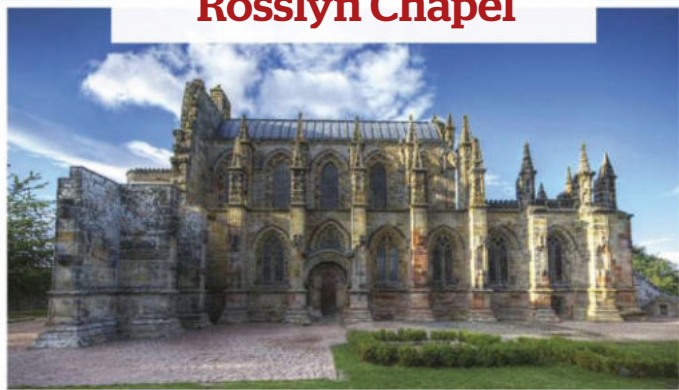
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# The 2016 CULTURE GUIDE

## Rosslyn Chapel



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### Contact details

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tel: 0131 440 2159

## Syon Park



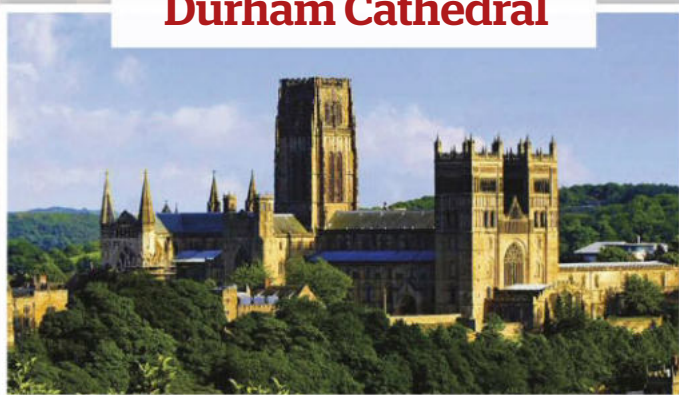
Just a short journey away from Heathrow is Syon Park, the London home of the Duke of Northumberland. The magnificent House and Gardens are set in 200 acres of parkland and Capability Brown designed gardens, which includes the Great Conservatory, lakes, restaurant, an indoor adventure playground and gift shop.

Whether it is as a heritage site, film location or as an exclusive hospitality venue, Syon Park continues to welcome, inform and fascinate its visitors. For more information, admissions and opening times please contact the Estate Office or visit the website below.

### Contact details

web: [www.syonpark.co.uk](http://www.syonpark.co.uk)  
email: [info@syonpark.co.uk](mailto:info@syonpark.co.uk)

## Durham Cathedral

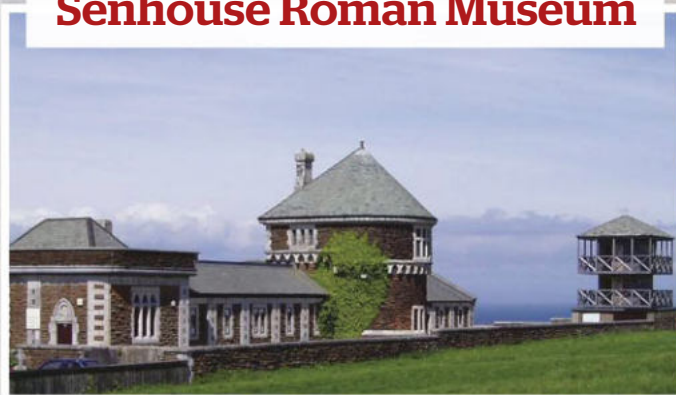


Discover 2,000 years of history at Durham Cathedral, one of the best examples of Romanesque architecture in Europe. Renowned for its spectacular location at the heart of the Durham UNESCO World Heritage Site, Durham Cathedral is the Shrine of St Cuthbert and resting place of the Venerable Bede. The Cathedral boasts some of the UK's best-preserved medieval monastic buildings, home to Open Treasure, a new world-class exhibition experience open from summer 2016. Embark on a journey of discovery through the medieval Monks' Dormitory to the Great Kitchen as the remarkable history of Durham Cathedral and its incredible collections is revealed.

### Contact details

web: [www.durhamcathedral.co.uk](http://www.durhamcathedral.co.uk)  
email: [enquiries@durhamcathedral.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@durhamcathedral.co.uk)

## Senhouse Roman Museum



Overlooking the coastal town of Maryport and the Solway Firth, the Museum houses an internationally significant collection of objects recovered from the adjacent Roman fort and civilian settlement. Visitors can discover what life was like for the soldiers and their families on the Solway Coast Frontier of Hadrian's Wall.

Offering something for anyone interesting in the history and archaeology of Roman West Cumbria, the Museum has a year-long events programme including a Summer Roman Festival. See website for opening times, admission charges and events programme.

### Contact details

web: [www.senhousemuseum.co.uk](http://www.senhousemuseum.co.uk)  
email: [senhousemuseum@aol.com](mailto:senhousemuseum@aol.com)



## Fishbourne Roman Palace



**F**ishbourne Roman Palace is a remarkable archaeological site, with a fascinating story to tell. Visitors to the site have an unrivalled opportunity to explore this first century home and marvel at the largest collection of early mosaic floors in Britain. Make the most of your visit by joining in with one of the popular guided tours of the remains and then enjoy a stroll around the reconstructed Roman gardens.

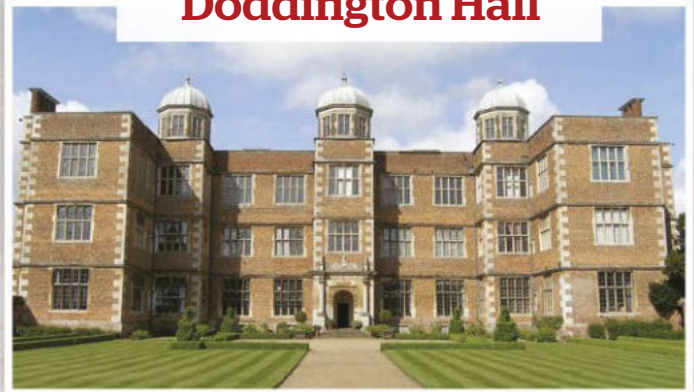
The site is open daily from 1st February to 15th December with special events, talks and tours on offer throughout the year.

### Contact details

web: [www.sussexpast.co.uk/fishbourne](http://www.sussexpast.co.uk/fishbourne)  
email: [adminfish@sussexpast.co.uk](mailto:adminfish@sussexpast.co.uk)



## Doddington Hall



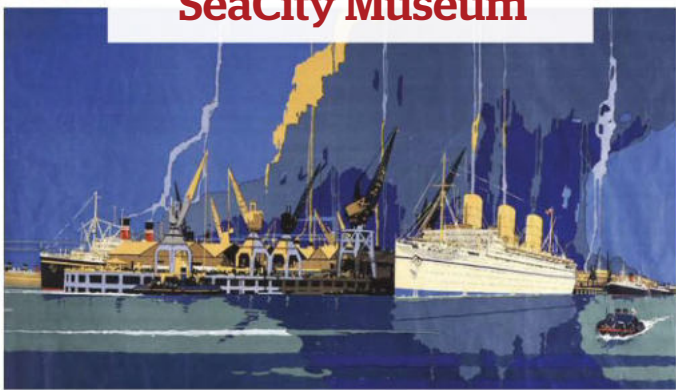
**B**egun in 1595 by Robert Smythson Doddington Hall, near Lincoln, was completed in 1600 and has never been sold or cleared out since. An example of a fine late Elizabethan Mansion, it is still a lived-in and much loved family home, alive with history and interest.

The Estate continues to grow and since 2006 there has been much development including the restoration of the walled Kitchen Garden and the opening of an award-winning Farm Shop. The gardens are full of colour and interest year-round whether it is the spectacular Irises in early June or biennial Sculpture Exhibition (30 July–11 September). See website for full opening times and event details.

### Contact details

web: [www.doddingtonhall.com](http://www.doddingtonhall.com)  
tel: 01522 812510

## SeaCity Museum



**P**ort Out, Southampton Home, SeaCity Museum's new exhibition for 2016, will tell the story of the great ocean liners that sailed from the city, and will evoke the romance of sea travel and life on board.

The exhibition includes a wide range of rarely seen items from the city's maritime collection, including ship models, posters and photographs, see furniture and other items from famous ships such as Mauretania, Queen Mary and QE2, and learn about the people who travelled and worked on them. Visitors of all ages can have a go at activities such as deck quoits or try on a captain's or steward's uniform!

### Contact details

web: [www.seacitymuseum.co.uk](http://www.seacitymuseum.co.uk)  
email: [museums@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:museums@southampton.gov.uk)

## Segedunum Roman Fort



**S**egedunum Roman Fort is at the eastern end of Hadrian's Wall, the 73 mile frontier system built in AD122 on the order of the Emperor Hadrian along the most northern edge of the Roman Empire.

Nestled on the banks of the River Tyne in North Tyneside where the old Swan Hunter shipyards were, Segedunum is the most excavated fort along the Wall. With surviving foundations of several buildings and part of the Wall itself, there is a large interactive museum plus a section of Wall. The 35 metre high viewing tower provides outstanding views across this World Heritage Site.

### Contact details

web: [www.segedunumromanfort.org.uk](http://www.segedunumromanfort.org.uk)  
email: [info@segedunumromanfort.org.uk](mailto:info@segedunumromanfort.org.uk)



# The 2016 CULTURE GUIDE

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## Llangollen Railway



**L**langollen Railway is a Heritage Railway line starting at Llangollen Station and continuing upstream to the town of Corwen. The 10 mile section of line offers a sample of the sights and sounds of yesteryear passing through some of the finest natural beauty North Wales has to offer. The Railway offers service trains everyday from the end of April to September.

### Contact details

web: [www.llangollen-railway.co.uk](http://www.llangollen-railway.co.uk)  
email: [info@llangollen-railway.co.uk](mailto:info@llangollen-railway.co.uk)

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The Village is open daily from 19th March until 30th October 2016.

### Contact details

web: [www.tramway.co.uk](http://www.tramway.co.uk)  
email: [enquiry@tramway.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@tramway.co.uk)



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[www.rafmuseum.org](http://www.rafmuseum.org)

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# MISCELLANY

Q&A



## QUIZ

BY JULIAN HUMPHRYS

Try your hand at this month's history quiz

ONLINE  
QUIZZES  
historyextra.com  
/bbchistory-  
magazine/quiz

1. Which German car brand derives its name from the daughter of the 19th-century motoring enthusiast Emil Jelleneck?
2. What was invented in 1557 by the Welsh mathematician Robert Recorde?
3. England's oldest example of *what* is believed to be in Stoke d'Abernon Church in Surrey?
4. Which organisation was joined in 1941 by fashion designer Hardy Amies (shown left)?
5. The Red Maids' Hospital was founded in Bristol in 1634. What is its significance today?
6. Who was the first woman to be awarded one of these?



### QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Mercedes 2. The equals sign 3. A monumental brass – this one is of Sir John d'Abernon, who died in 1277 4. The Special Operations Executive
5. It's the oldest surviving girls' school in England
6. Florence Nightingale, who received the Order of Merit in 1907

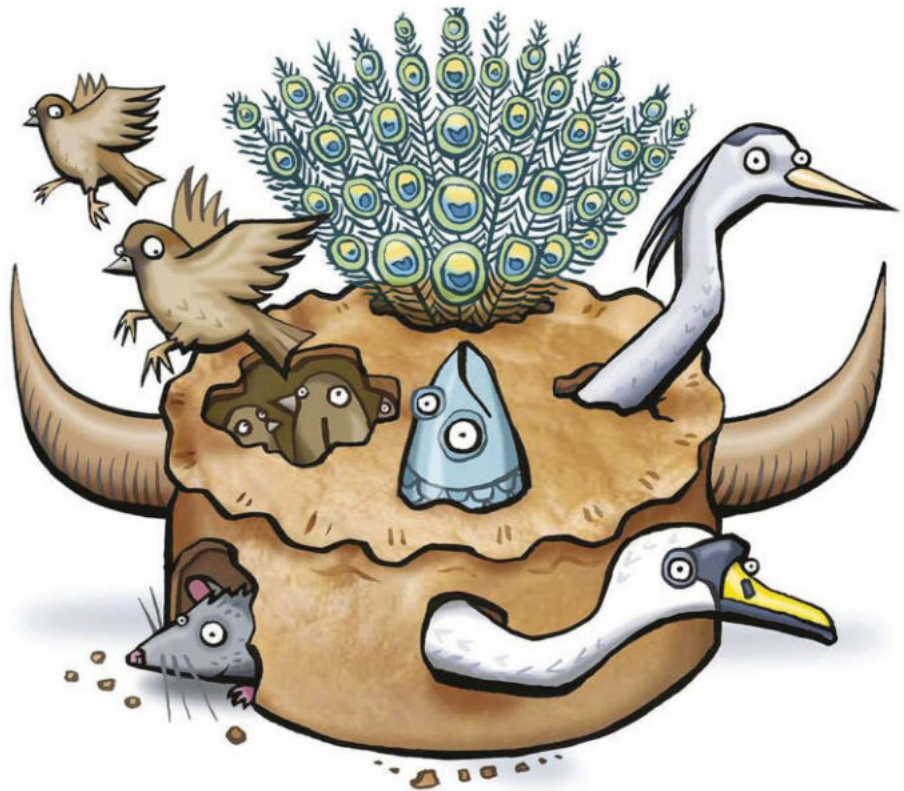


ILLUSTRATION BY GLEN MCBETH

## Q How did people feast in the Middle Ages? And what food would have been served to the feasters?

Stefano Gelano, via Facebook

**A** Feasting was one of the great communal activities of the Middle Ages, with participants ranging from lords and their households to agricultural workers marking the harvest.

The dining practices of the late medieval elite travelled through society: the structure of meals, their timing, and the style of cuisine – especially an enthusiasm for spiced foods and acidic sauces that accompanied most dishes.

What people ate depended on the religious calendar. Abstinence from meat (it stimulated lust and gluttony) was common in England in the later Middle Ages, not just on Fridays but also on Saturdays, the seasons of Lent and Advent, and on days preceding major saints' days. On these occasions

fish might be served – if the participants could afford it.

Food came to the table in courses made up of separate dishes. An elite meal might start with a pottage (a thick soup or stew) served alongside boiled meats such as beef and mutton, and maybe a fried dish – a 'fritter'. A second course might comprise further pottage, with roast meats and prestigious birds such as peacocks and herons, a set cream dish or jelly and a fritter. A third course might include further creams, roasted small birds such as sparrows, possibly a fruit dish and a fritter. Fruit and cheese might conclude the meal.

**Chris Woolgar**, professor of history and archival studies, University of Southampton



## SAMANTHA'S RECIPE CORNER



Every issue, picture editor **Samantha Nott** brings you a recipe from the past. This month it is a fried dough treat traditionally made on the island of Jersey

### Jersey wonders

These delicious doughnut style treats, still popular at fairs and festivals in Jersey, are a time honoured recipe and well worth the calories! Traditionally, so the story goes, Jersey households would cook the wonders as the tide went out – because cooking them on an incoming tide would result in fat overflowing from the pan. I made sure I cooked these at low tide and was very pleased with the result.

#### INGREDIENTS

- 3½oz caster sugar
- 7oz soft unsalted butter
- 3 large eggs
- pinch of ground nutmeg
- 1lb plain flour
- oil or lard for frying

#### METHOD

Beat the sugar and butter together until pale and creamy and then add the eggs and nutmeg and mix well. Add the flour gradually and then once the dough becomes stiff turn it out onto a work surface and knead for 20 minutes. Wrap the dough in cling film and then leave in

the fridge to rest and chill for at least half an hour.

Next, cut off a small golf ball sized piece of dough and flatten it out, using a rolling pin, into an oval shape. Cut three even slits in the centre of the dough and then twist the top end of the oval through the middle slit. Repeat the process until all the dough is used up.

Heat a pan of oil or lard (I used sunflower oil) making sure there is enough oil in the pan to cover the dough. When the oil is hot, drop in a few wonders at a time and fry until golden brown.

#### VERDICT

My wonders were wonky as I found the twisting part a bit fiddly. However, they were great fun to make, tasted delicious and were gone within minutes.

#### Difficulty: 5/10

#### Time: 1 hour

Taken from a 19th-century recipe found in *Pride and Pudding: The History of British Puddings* by Regula Ysewijn (Murdoch, 2016)



An inviting pile of Jersey wonders, served lightly dusted with icing sugar

## GOT A QUESTION?

Write to *BBC History Magazine*, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN. Email: [historymagazine@historyextra.com](mailto:historymagazine@historyextra.com) or submit via our website: [historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine](http://historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine)



The cardinal directions were used in many cultures, but it is thought that the Chinese were the inventors of the compass

## Q When and why did people start using the cardinal directions: north, east, south and west?

Catherine Smith, by email

**A** The modern terms entered the Romance languages as adaptations of Germanic words during the great migrations of the fourth to the ninth centuries AD. But the use of the four so-called 'cardinal directions' is ancient, because the sun moves roughly east to west through the day, while north and south are at an approximate 90-degree angle to the line of the sun's movement.

We assume that the earliest societies navigated by landmarks, but the sun and stars, particularly the pole star and the Plough ('Big Dipper'), were used in prehistoric times.

Travelling longer distances by sea, the winds were important. Four Greek gods – the Anemoi – represented winds from the cardinal directions: Boreas (N), Eurus (E), Notos (S) and Zephyrus (W). An ancient building, the Tower of the Winds in Athens, represents these and four lesser deities for intermediate directions. The Romans adapted these gods.

Cardinal directions were known in Asia, Arabic cultures, the far east, the Americas and Australia. Maps from Qin and Han China show the north and south respectively at the top, though Chinese and other cultures also added a fifth direction for the centre.

Modern geographic and cartographic conventions emerged with the dominance of western science in the 19th century, but in history the cardinal directions were only part of a much bigger navigational (and astronomical) toolkit. Well into the 20th century, outsiders were staggered by the ability of Polynesian and Micronesian navigators to cross immense expanses of ocean to reach tiny islands, using knowledge of the sun, stars, seas, tidal swells, cloud formations and local wildlife, all passed down by their forebears.

Eugene Byrne, history journalist

GETTY IMAGES



# PRIZE CROSSWORD

Billy the Kid had  
several aliases  
(see 19 down)



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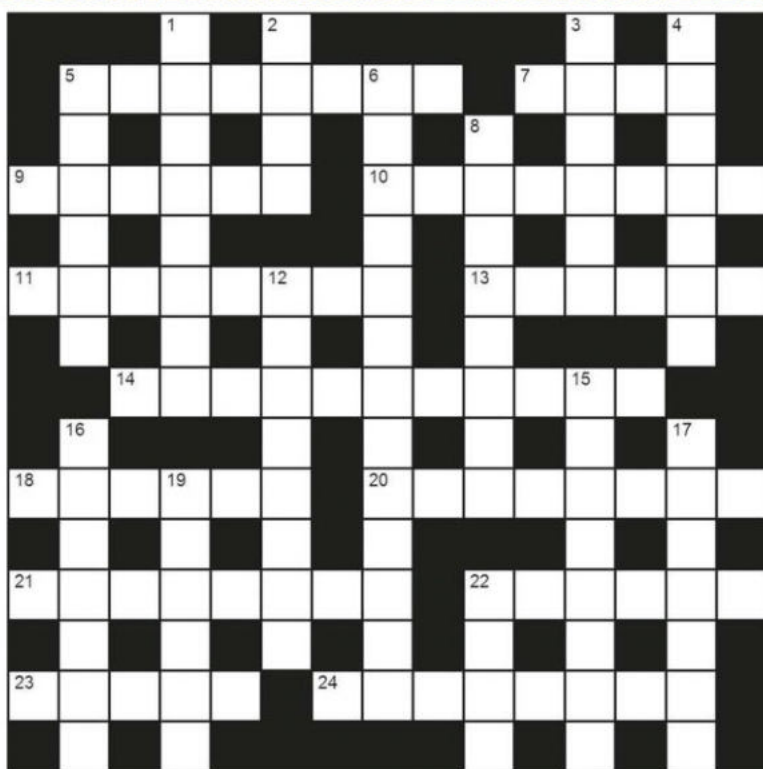
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### Across

- 5** British soldier and statesman, chief minister (who died in office) of George I (8)  
**7** See 11 across  
**9** German city whose name derives from the Benedictine monks who established a monastery at its location (6)  
**10** Descriptive of an order of Germanic Knights founded at the time of the Third Crusade (8)  
**11/7** Historic description of settlements such as Tombstone or Peshawar (8,4)  
**13** Founder of the Society of Jesus, and former 16th-century soldier, Ignatius of \_\_\_\_ (6)  
**14** English navigator, a seeker of the Northwest Passage, cast adrift by his mutinous crew and never seen again (5,6)  
**18** American astronomer whose observations in the first half of the 20th century played a major role in the 'expanding universe' theory (6)  
**20** A large-scale crime against people as perpetrated in Rwanda in 1994 (8)  
**21** A gold rush at the end of the 1890s occurred here in north-western Canada (8)  
**22** Portuguese coastal town whose name derives from the Roman Aviarium ('gathering place of birds') (6)  
**23** Thomas Cromwell was an earl of \_\_\_\_ (5)  
**24** Orkney location of the Ring of Brodgar, the circle of standing stones and henge that are part of a World Heritage Site (8)



### Down

- 1** Female symbol of the French Republic (8)  
**2** Nader \_\_\_\_ was an early 18th-century ruler whose empire stretched from the Indus to the Caucasus Mountains (4)  
**3** Jamestown was the first permanent English one in the Americas (6)  
**4** A famous series of army rifles is associated with this London borough (7)  
**5** The name (after the Scottish explorer) of Alice Springs until 1933 (6)  
**6** He oversaw the modernisation and development of Russia and a narrowing of the gap between it and the west (5,3,5)  
**8** Scottish moor, scene of the defeat of the 1746 Jacobite rebellion (8)  
**12** People whose (modern) nation came into being following a declaration of statehood on 14 May 1948 (8)  
**15** See 22 down  
**16** The naval equivalent of the military sabre (7)  
**17** Such as the presidential one in 1863 at the site of a crucial battle of the American Civil War (7)  
**19** Another alias of the outlaw Billy the Kid was William H \_\_\_\_ (6)  
**22/15** Her marriage, a political one, to a king of England was annulled after only six months (4,2,6)

Compiled by **Eddie James**

### SOLUTION TO OUR FEBRUARY CROSSWORD

**Across:** 7 Armour 9 Wansdyke 11 Chou En-Lai 12 Owain 13 Edith 14 Sigismund 16 Pella 17 Hoover 20 Transvaal 22 Edict 24 Aztec 26 Steve Biko 27 Thutmoses 28 Uganda. **Down:** 1 Sanchez 2 Bucephalus 3 Ealing 4 Oslo 5 Syracuse 6 Kennedy 8 Maori 10 Alesia 15 Stonehenge 16 Plautius 17 Halley 18 U Thant 19 Ottoman 21 Assisi 23 Ilium 25 Camp.

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- The crossword competition is open to all residents of the UK (inc. Channel Islands), aged 18 or over, except Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited employees or contractors, and anyone connected with the competition or their direct family members. By entering participants agree to be bound by these terms and conditions and that their name and county may be released if they win. Only one entry permitted per person.
- The closing date and time is as shown under How to Enter, above. Entries received after that will not be considered. Entries cannot be returned. Entrants must supply full name, address and daytime phone number. Immediate Media Company (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) will not publish your personal details or provide them to anyone without permission. Read more about the Immediate Privacy Policy at [immediatemediaco.co.uk/privacy-policy/](http://immediatemediaco.co.uk/privacy-policy/).
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Exactly  
where is  
Orkney's Ring  
of Brodgar?  
(see 24 across)



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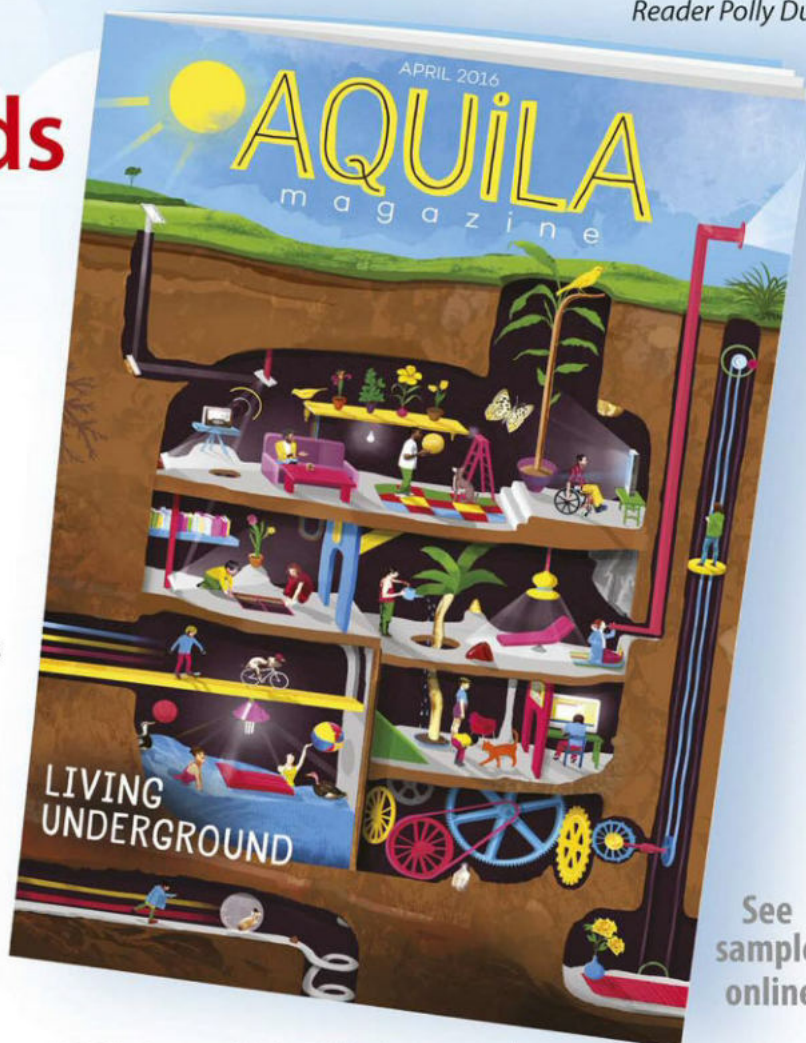
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See sample online

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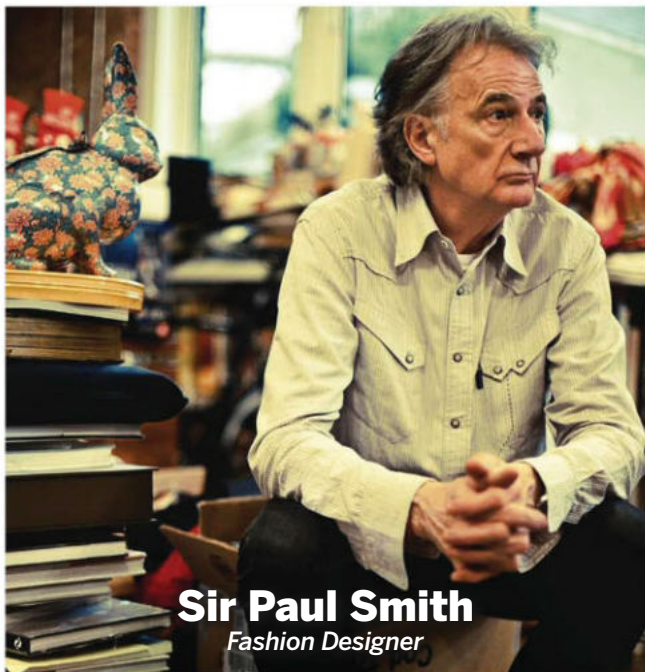


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When Luciano Giubbilei first met world-renowned fashion designer Sir Paul Smith at the Chelsea Flower Show in 2011, it was a meeting that was to set Luciano on a new path in his design career. For our talk Luciano and Sir Paul will look back at the effects of that meeting and explore what for them are key relationships between fashion, plants, flowers and design.

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Joanne Paul on one of the most controversial figures of the Tudor era



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Spencer Mizen picks out some of history's most curious undergarments





"His galvanising of his peers in early 20th-century Paris – Picasso, Jarry, Chagall, Cocteau – was crucial to many of the movements we now recognise as modern, in both literary and visual arts"

Broadcaster Francine Stock chooses

# Guillaume Apollinaire

(1880-1918)

Guillaume Apollinaire was a poet and writer who played an important role in the avant-garde movements of the early 20th century. He spent most of his adult life in Paris, where he published a number of volumes of poetry while befriending and promoting several leading lights in the city's art scene. After war broke out in 1914, Apollinaire served in the French infantry. In 1916 he was wounded and subsequently discharged, returning to Paris and his literary work for the last two years of his life.

### When did you first hear about Apollinaire?

Though I studied French at university, I'd barely registered Apollinaire except as a phenomenon – the distinctive young French poet of the First World War, a poster-boy for the Modern, the man who named both Cubism and Surrealism. Then a couple of years ago, while I was working on the 1914 section of the BBC Radio 4 series *The Cultural Front*, I re-read his poem *The Little Car*, about the outbreak of war. Its immediacy and insight, combining reportage, vulnerability and an ambition to synthesise the conflict in unforgettable images, sent me back to read him again.

### What kind of person was he?

Wilhelm Albert Włodzimierz Apolinary Kostrowitsky (Apollinaire's name at birth) was a dazzling amalgam. Born in Rome the illegitimate son of a young Polish aristocrat and, it's assumed, an Italian army officer (though one fantasy has it that he was conceived in the most private chambers of the Vatican), he was eventually raised with his brother in France, a country he adopted and fought for. Artist and adventurer, he was at the heart of the Parisian avant-garde. As creative as he was sociable, he was an experimenter and innovator who was also a leader and an eroticist who could be profoundly romantic.

### What made Apollinaire a hero?

He may not score high on conventional valour (though he was fearless in pursuit of love) but his invention and his galvanising of his peers in early 20th-century Paris – Picasso, Alfred Jarry, Chagall and Cocteau among them – were crucial to many of the movements we now recognise as modern, in both literary and



Guillaume Apollinaire, painted with Marie Laurencin by Henri Rousseau in 1909, was "an experimenter and innovator who was also a leader", says Francine Stock

visual arts. He had a particular sensitivity for the Cubism of human experience: deracinated himself, he could inhabit other perspectives with insight and compassion, such as that of a gunner from Dakar caught in the chaos of a European war. While he experimented with form (even on a page, in verse pictures), his work is always accessible, rich in humanity and humour. He's also the only French poet I know of to have written a poem about Landon Road in Clapham.

Even his death has an absurd lyricism. His health was compromised in the First World War when he received a shrapnel wound (after which he was trepanned), and he succumbed to the Spanish influenza pandemic days before the armistice in November 1918.

### Is there anything you don't admire about him?


His ebullience was surely exhausting; his amorous pursuit potentially intimidating; his work is not consistently brilliant; some of the erotic juxtapositions he includes in accounts of war seem too obvious, at least to a contemporary reader. And I've not yet tackled the pornographic writings that made him the money to continue with more experimental work – but maybe one day...

### How would you describe Apollinaire's legacy today?

He's insufficiently enjoyed and celebrated. To rectify that I recommend a new edition of his selected poems with parallel translation by Martin Sorrell (OUP, 2015).

### If you could meet Apollinaire, what would you ask him?

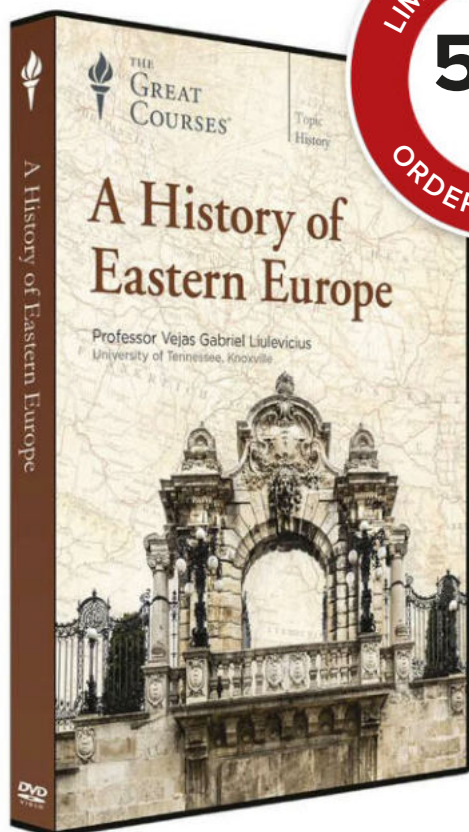
I'd love to know what he made of a 21st century in which we commune mainly with electronic devices but are as obsessed as any 19th-century symbolist with the meaning of our interior lives.

And I'd want to talk about animals. *The Bestiary* (an early work illustrated by Raoul Dufy) is a series of short verses, observations on animal traits, that are also acute and amusing about human behaviour. Published in 1911 in a limited edition of 120, only half of the books sold. Which would make a cat laugh. 

Francine Stock is an author and broadcaster. Her BBC Radio 4 series *The Cultural Front*, about the impact of the First World War on art and society, returns on 9 April







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